

PAUL SEARS
**DRAWING
POWERFUL
HEROES!**
BRUTES AND BABES!



VOLUME 1

SEARS





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Nothing is ever quite as easy as you think,

this book is definitive proof of that. I thought that starting with the existing *Brutes and Babes* tutorials, this thing would be a breeze. Was I ever wrong. This book

would not exist without the incredible help of others. I'd like to thank all of the backers

from Kickstarter and Indiegogo who made all of this possible. **Sean HusVar**, without whom none of this would have happened. **Andy Smith** and **Ron Marz**, whose comments, wisecracks and editorial skills proved invaluable. **Jay Penn**, who faithfully preserved and prepared all the existing tutorials and worked tirelessly helping to put all of this together.

Everyone at **Sleeping Giant** for all of their exhaustive efforts, and **Phil Smith**, who made this book, clear, concise, readable, and damn good looking! Finally, my wife, Michelle, who helped and supported - and pushed - me all along the way.

- Bart



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INTRODUCTION

Hello, welcome to the new *Brutes and Babes* featured in *Drawing Powerful Heroes*.

I'm Bart Sears, comic book artist, concept artist, art director, teacher, writer, procrastinator, sculptor, designer, hack; I guess I've done a lot over the years.

The genesis for what follows in this tome was first published in *Wizard Magazine*, in my how-to-draw column called "*Brutes and Babes*". However, what is printed here isn't just reprinted, it's super-charged; revised, updated and expanded, filled with new art and instruction.

I wrote the last *Brutes and Babes* tutorial around 20 years ago, and honestly, it feels like the day before yesterday, but a lot has happened since then. The comic industry has taken some pretty big hits even as their bread-and-butter characters have exploded financially onto the big screen, and my humble career has headed in directions I never imagined...

... and brought me back nearly full-circle, to Ominous Press and *Brutes and Babes*.

Got to say, it's a pretty good place to be (picture me smiling...well, maybe not me, I'm old and scary, but picture a generic satisfied smile).

Drawing, like any art form, is fun, exciting rewarding and often incredibly painful; it takes a lot of time, patience, and practice. First we must crawl, then walk, then jog for hundreds of miles before we can really start running – that's the good stuff.

In the following pages, I'm going to attempt to pass on some insight, instruction, tips, hints, tricks and plain old-school, time-honored, classic rules of illustration we use to draw powerful comics. All pretty good stuff that you can use to – hopefully – better whatever art you do.

Bart Sears
August, 2017

#1 ANATOMY



BRUTES AND BABES!

**DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS
BY BART SEARS**

Hello, welcome to *Brutes and Babes*.

Throughout this chapter and those that follow I will attempt to give you some instruction, helpful hints tips and insights into drawing powerful comics.

Our topics will include anatomy, storytelling, style, perspective, layout, motion, and action, acting and expressions, inking and referencing.

Drawing comics is fun and exciting but drawing comics well takes time, patience and lots and lots of practice.

So...let's get to it!



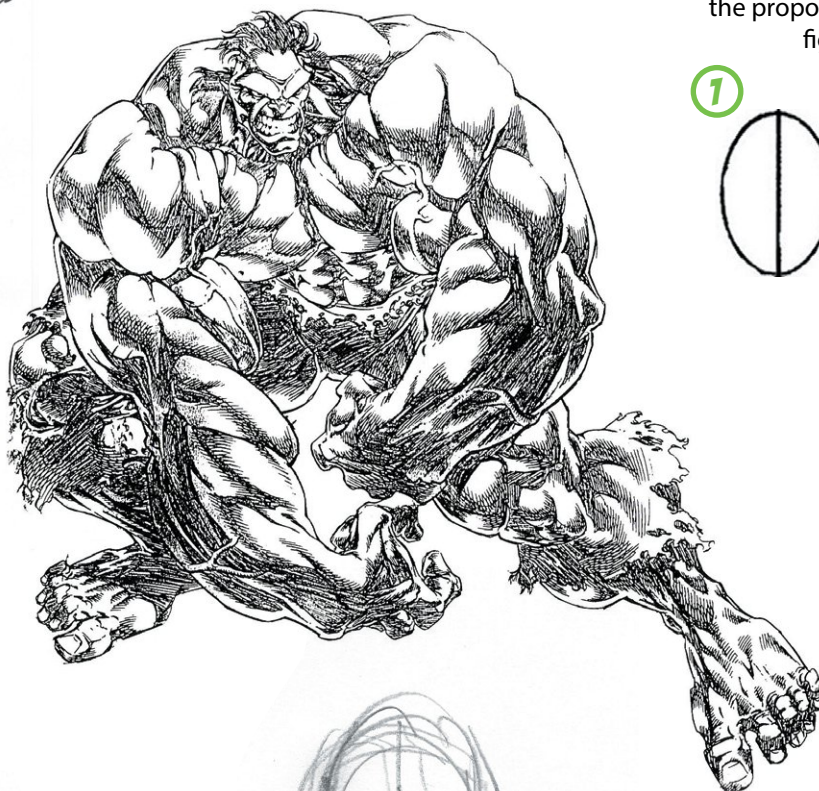


#1 ANATOMY

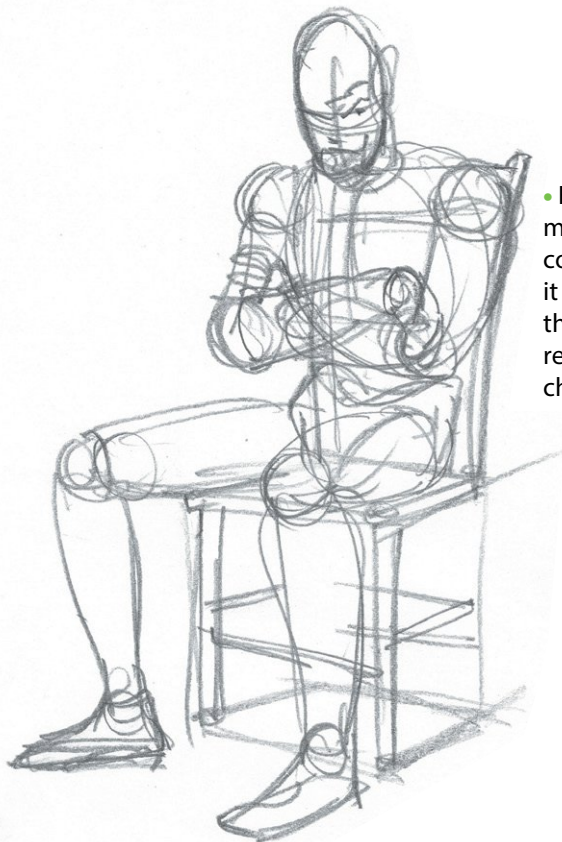
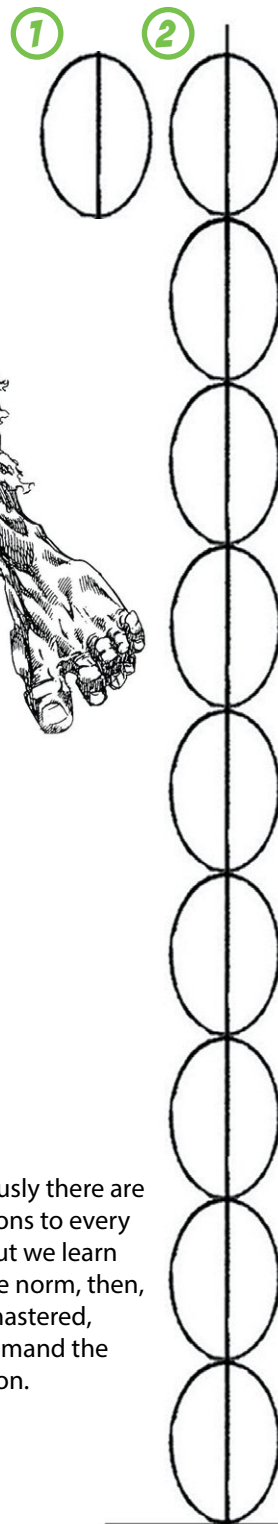


• Proportion is the way in which the sizes of different things relate to one another in believable or convincing ways.

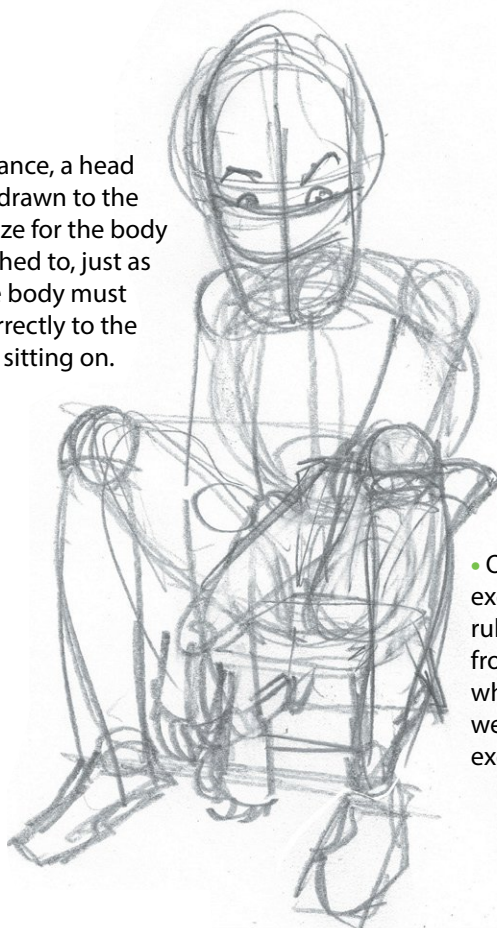
• Proportion is the most basic, necessary ingredient to drawing anything, from humans to animals, from cars to buildings, from Batman to the Hulk.



• 9 stacked heads determines the rest of the proportions of your figure.



• For instance, a head must be drawn to the correct size for the body it is attached to, just as the same body must relate correctly to the chair it is sitting on.



• Obviously there are exceptions to every rule... but we learn from the norm, then, when mastered, we command the exception.

#1 ANATOMY



HEAD HEIGHT - Refers to how many lengths of the head, from chin to crown, make up the height of a figure.

All other proportion measures are made using this length or fractions of it.

Let's start with a powerful, heroic 9-head tall male body.

1- To begin with draw a basic egg-shaped head approximately half again as tall as it is wide.

2- Next, mark out eight more head heights below the first head, on the center line.

3- Next, mark off the rest of the proportions as follows:

A) 1/4 head length below the chin is the shoulder line.

B) Shoulders are 3 head lengths wide.

C) Width of chest within the shoulders is 2 head lengths centered on the center line.

D) Width of waist at meeting of third and fourth heads in 1 1/2 head lengths.

E) Width of hips at meeting of fourth and fifth heads in 1 2/3rds head lengths.

F) Top of knee line at meeting of sixth and seventh heads.

G) Ankle line is 1/3 head length up from bottom of eighth head (Ground line at bottom of ninth head).

H) Arm line is drawn through the shoulder line. 1 head length from the center line.

I) Upper arm is 1 and 2/3 head lengths to elbow.

J) Lower arm is 1 and 1/4 head lengths from elbow to wrist.

K) Hand is 3/4 head length long.

L) Leg line is drawn through hip line 1/2 head length from center line.

M) Thigh is 1 head length thick.

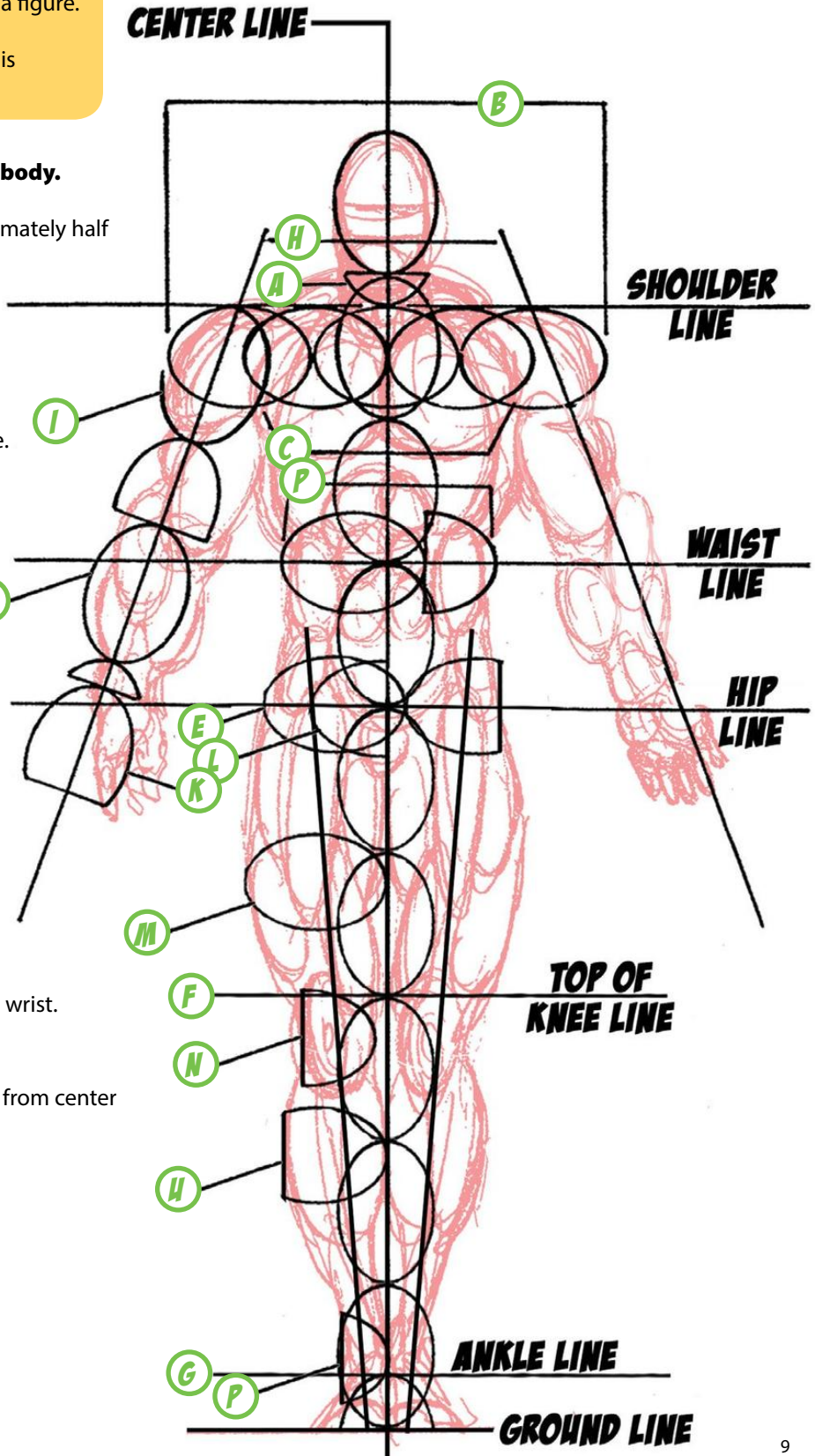
N) Knee is 1/2 head length thick.

O) Calf is 3/4 head length thick.

P) Ankle is 1/3 head length thick (roughly).

Q) Calf is 3/4 head length thick.

R) Ankle is 1/3 head length thick (roughly).



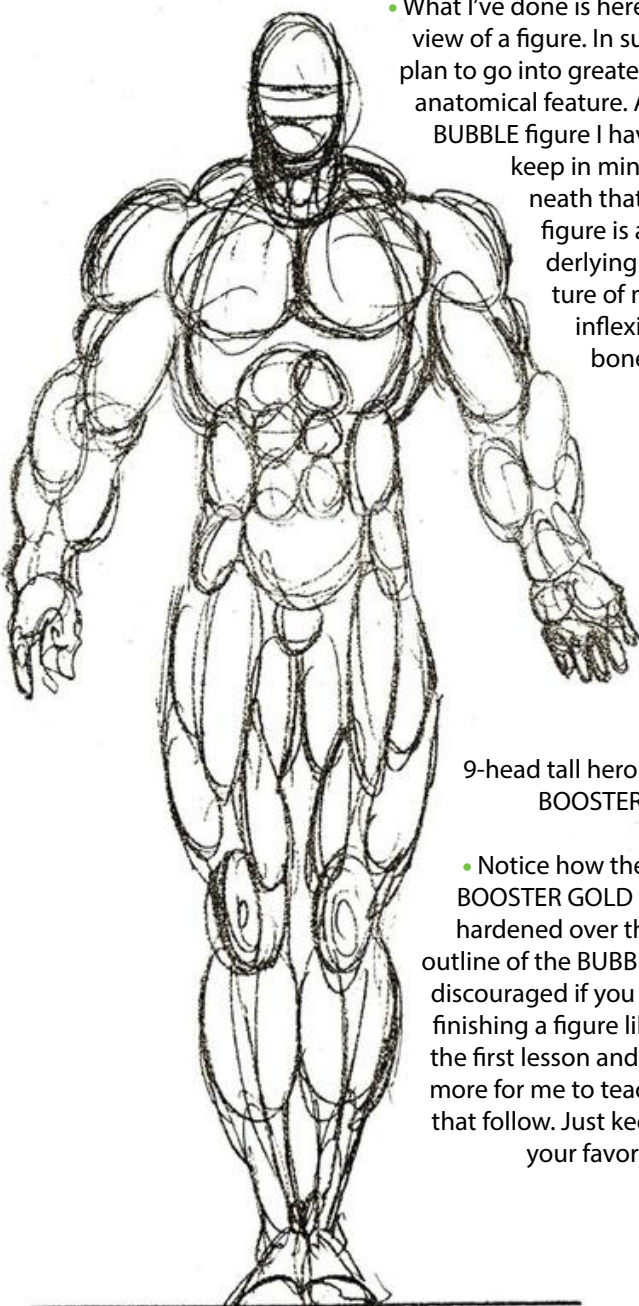


#1 ANATOMY

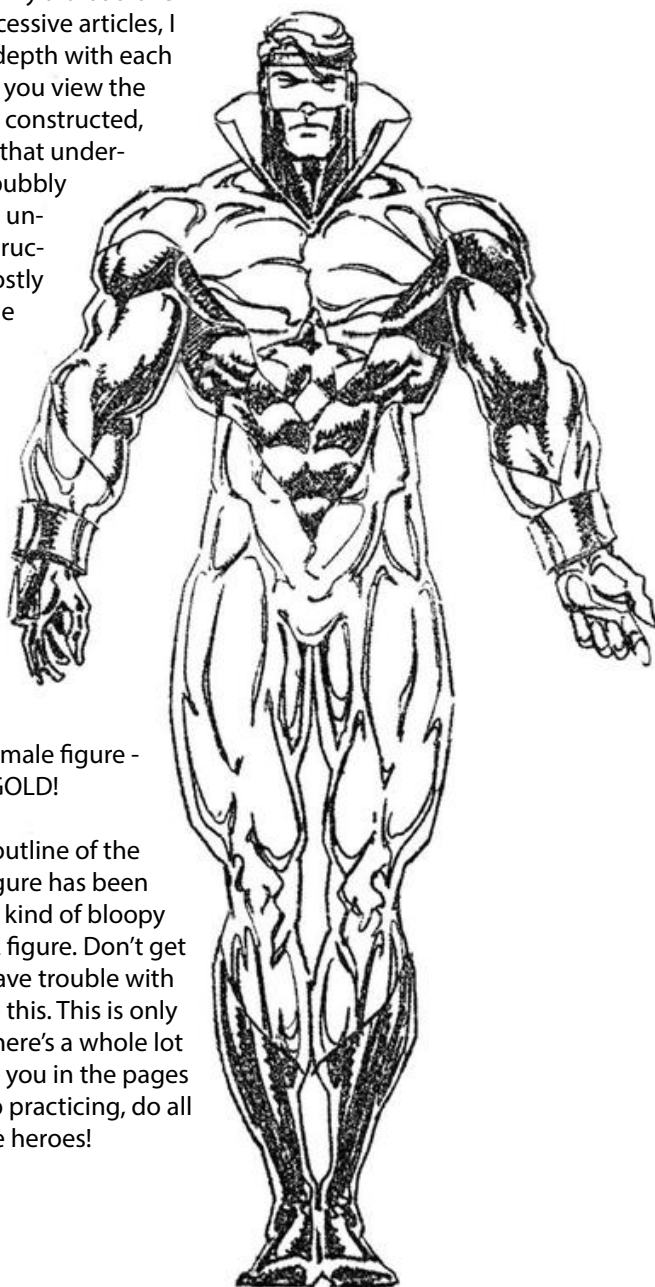
I realize that measuring and marking proportion is not the most fun thing in the world to do, but, once you learn it, your drawings will look more realistic, believable and powerful.

THE BUBBLE FIGURE - There are several different methods for constructing figures over your proportion breakdowns- scribbling, contouring, and the popular and worthwhile block and cube method. These methods are explained in great detail in many anatomy books. So with that in mind, I searched for a different way to explain construction. I realized as I was drawing that I use an almost BUBBLE type of construction shown here.

9-heads tall
stacked



- What I've done is here only a broad overview of a figure. In successive articles, I plan to go into greater depth with each anatomical feature. As you view the BUBBLE figure I have constructed, keep in mind that underneath that bubbly figure is an underlying structure of mostly inflexible bone.



9-head tall heroic male figure -
BOOSTER GOLD!

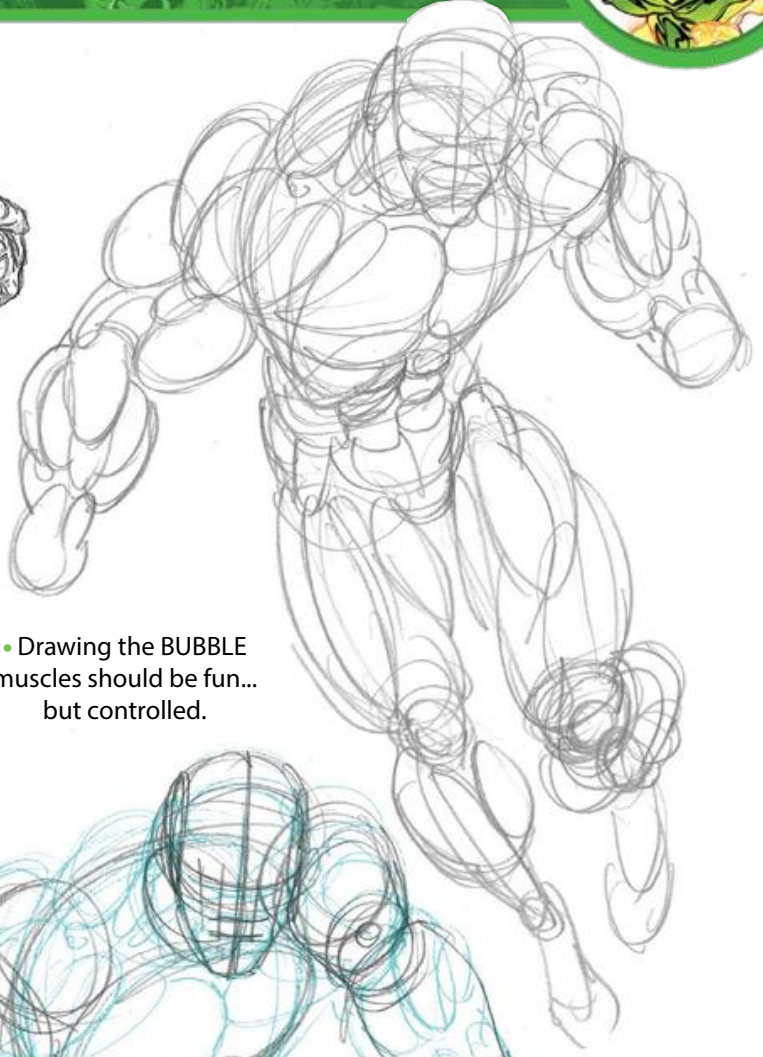
- Notice how the outline of the BOOSTER GOLD figure has been hardened over the kind of bloopy outline of the BUBBLE figure. Don't get discouraged if you have trouble with finishing a figure like this. This is only the first lesson and there's a whole lot more for me to teach you in the pages that follow. Just keep practicing, do all your favorite heroes!

#1 ANATOMY



Let's explore the concept of Bubble Muscles on a figure in motion. I've chosen this shot I drew of TITAN, from Advent Comics.

• Drawing the BUBBLE muscles should be fun... but controlled.

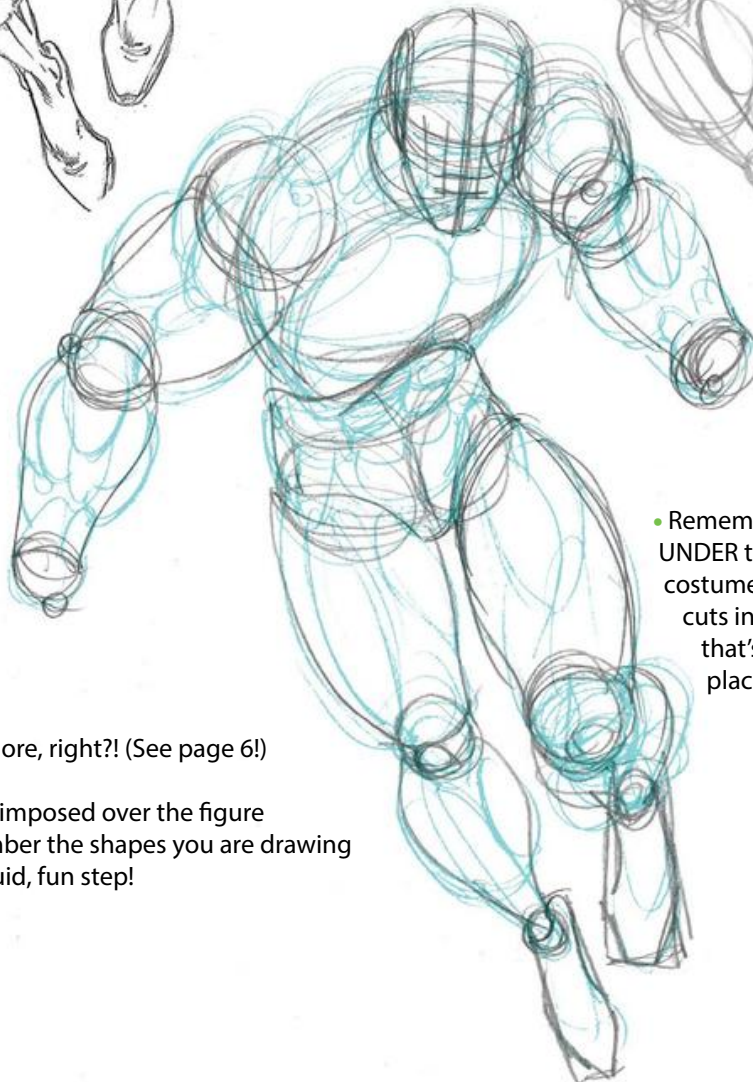


• The theory behind BUBBLE muscles is freedom. You still have to put the hours in learning anatomy, but with these loose, flowing shapes it's easier to free yourself from the confines of rigid structural anatomical drawing. Make sense?

It does require a bit of familiarity with human anatomy, but you need that to draw a figure anyway, right?

And figure drawing requires so much more, right?! (See page 6!)

At right, the BUBBLE muscles are super-imposed over the figure understructure. It's important to remember the shapes you are drawing here don't have to be perfect this is a fluid, fun step!

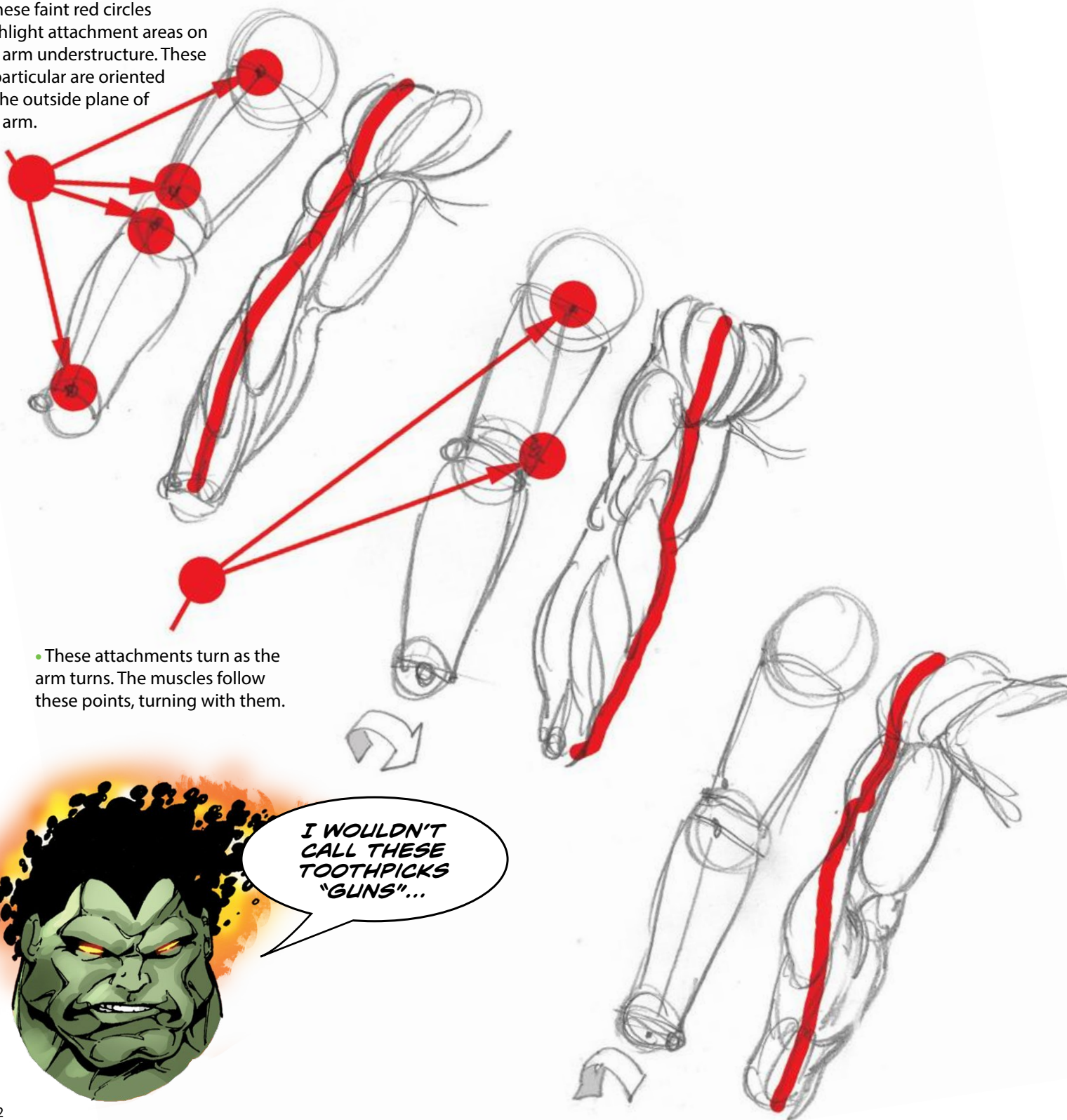


• Remember, the understructure is UNDER the muscles, skin clothing, costume, armor, etc. NOTHING cuts into the understructure that's solid, everything is placed on top of it!

#1 ANATOMY

Let's look at how bubble muscles attach to the inviolate understructure. we'll start with the male heroic arm. Of course, this is simplified, but based in reality.

- These faint red circles highlight attachment areas on the arm understructure. These in particular are oriented to the outside plane of the arm.



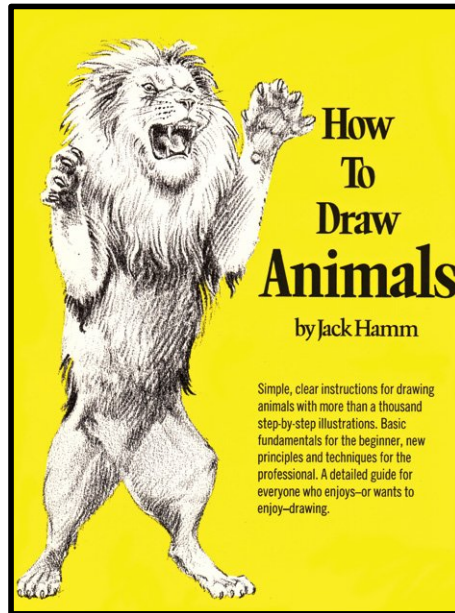
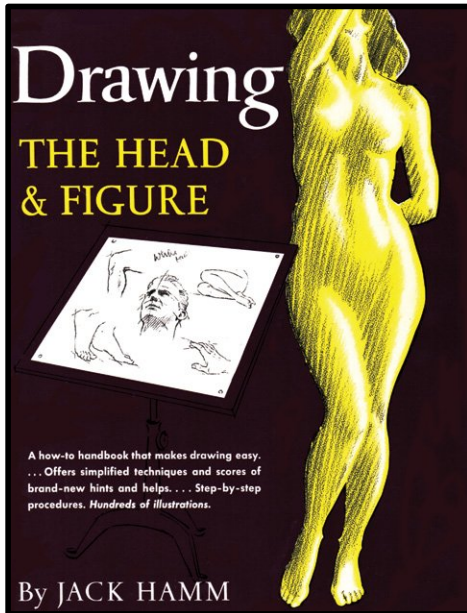
- These attachments turn as the arm turns. The muscles follow these points, turning with them.

I WOULDN'T
CALL THESE
TOOTHPICKS
"GLUNS"...

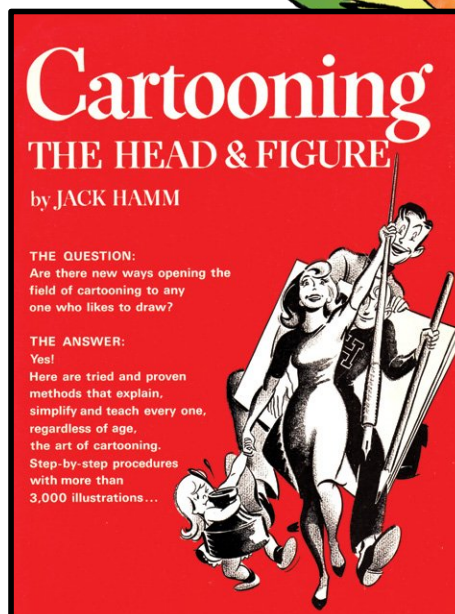
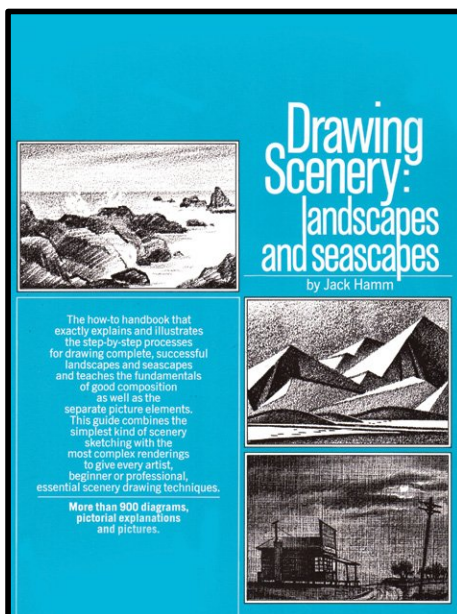
#1 ANATOMY



There are several good, instructive books on the market today dealing with comic book/illustrative anatomy and drawing in general. Some of my favorites have been the series of drawing books by **Jack Hamm**:



ALL OF
JACK HAMM'S
INCREDIBLE BOOKS
CAN BE FOUND
ONLINE!



If you pick up any of these books you'll soon see how talented this man is. The art may not be as exciting as your favorite contemporary comic, but, the basic drawing is undeniably brilliant: right on the mark.

I highly recommend all of these books for anyone serious about drawing comics.



Jack B. Hamm was an American artist from Wichita, Kansas who is recognized both for his Christian-themed artwork and editorial cartoons, and for his books on drawing technique. He both studied and taught at the Frederic Mizen Academy of Art. -- Wikipedia.com



#2 THE TORSO

BRUTES AND BABES!

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS
BY BART SEARS

Hi, welcome to the second installment of *Brutes and Babes*. I'm glad to have you back here with me again, there's a lot more to do.

In this chapter, we're going to look more closely at the torso, the masses that we use to construct it, how it bends and twists and how to finish it off clearly, cleanly and correctly. So sharpen your pencils and...

...let's get to it!

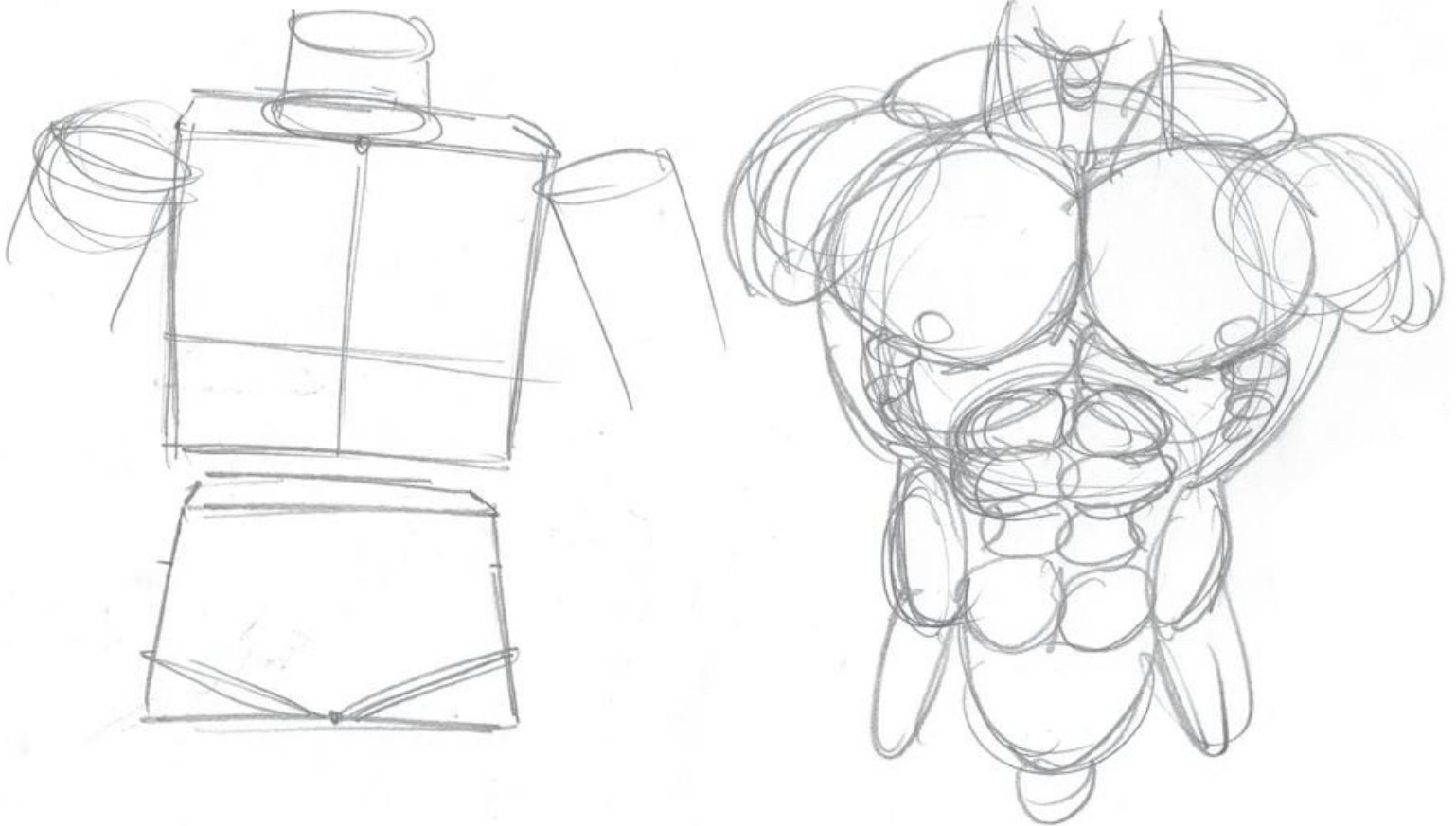


#2 THE TORSO



THE TORSO - The torso is the heart of any good figure drawing. For a superhero, the torso has to appear strong and muscular, yet flexible enough to twist that hero out of the way of even the most lethal death blast. Right now, let's take a look at the heroic male torso.

- Everything you draw **REQUIRES** a solid understructure. Understructure is a combination of simple shapes that interact and work together in space to define in a very basic manner whatever you are drawing, in this case a heroic male torso.



- The most popular, most powerful and easiest view to draw of the torso is the front view. I've illustrated this view in both a quick block and cube understructure and in the bubble muscle style we explored in the last chapter.

Let's pick apart the structure first.

Notice the almost egg-shaped bubble underneath it all; this is the all important rib-cage. Study the relationship of all the other bubble shapes to the rib-cage. Notice how the pectorals, or chest muscles, overlay it like two huge slabs; how the stomach washboard muscles cut up into it; how the external obliques (the two small side muscles on either side of the stomach and below the rib-cage) seem to cradle it.

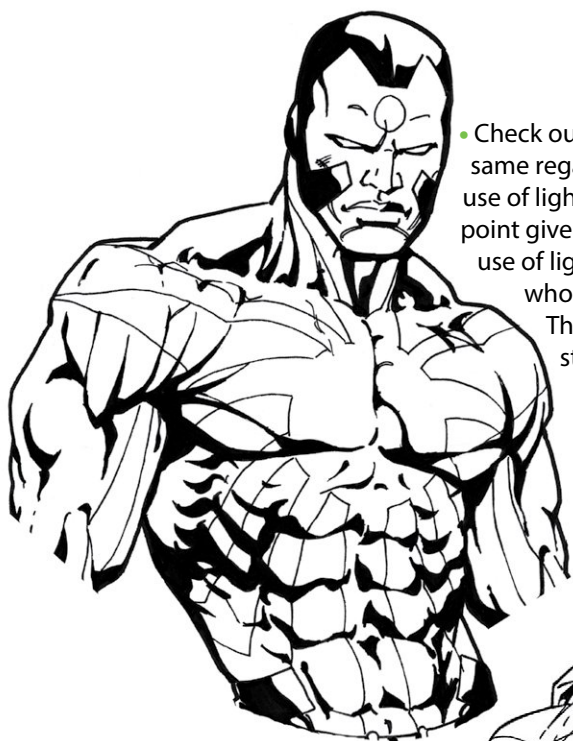
Notice the ball of the shoulders, how high they ride on the chest and the cutting v-shape of the two large back muscles (the latissimus dorsi or 'lats') as they slope from the middle of the shoulder to the bottom of the rib-cage.



#2 THE TORSO

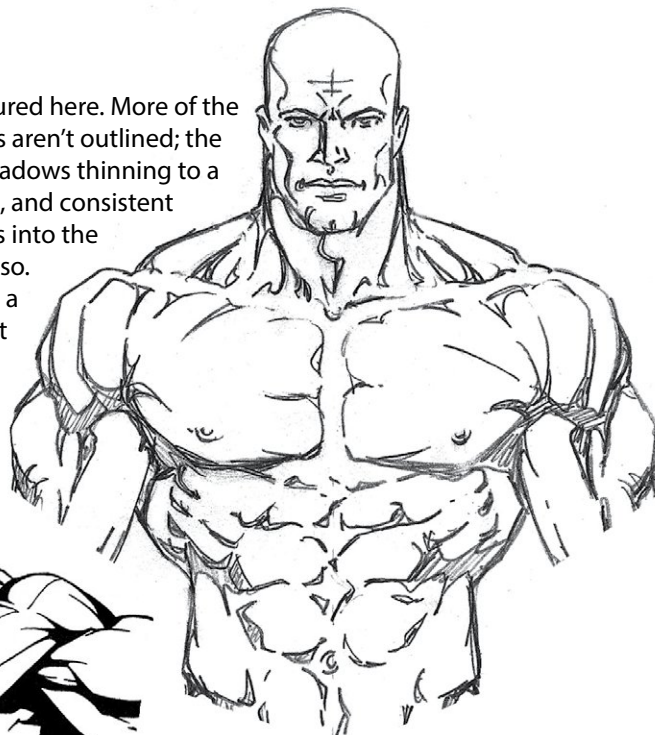
• Now look at how those bubbles translate into a more finished drawing. Look at how things are angled, creating a look of chiseled strength and hardness of form not present in the bubble torso.

You'll notice in this drawing, as well as many other drawings I've done, that a lot of line work is broken, the muscles aren't completely outlined, letting the eye fill in the gaps, creating a flow and movement to the musculature that is usually absent from a more outlined, less organic finish.



• Check out the three male torsos pictured here. More of the same regarding finishing, the muscles aren't outlined; the use of light implies the form; heavy shadows thinning to a point gives the individual forms shape, and consistent use of light meshes the smaller forms into the whole shape, in this case, the torso.

The use of light here is basic... a strong overhead light great at defining form simply.



#2 THE TORSO



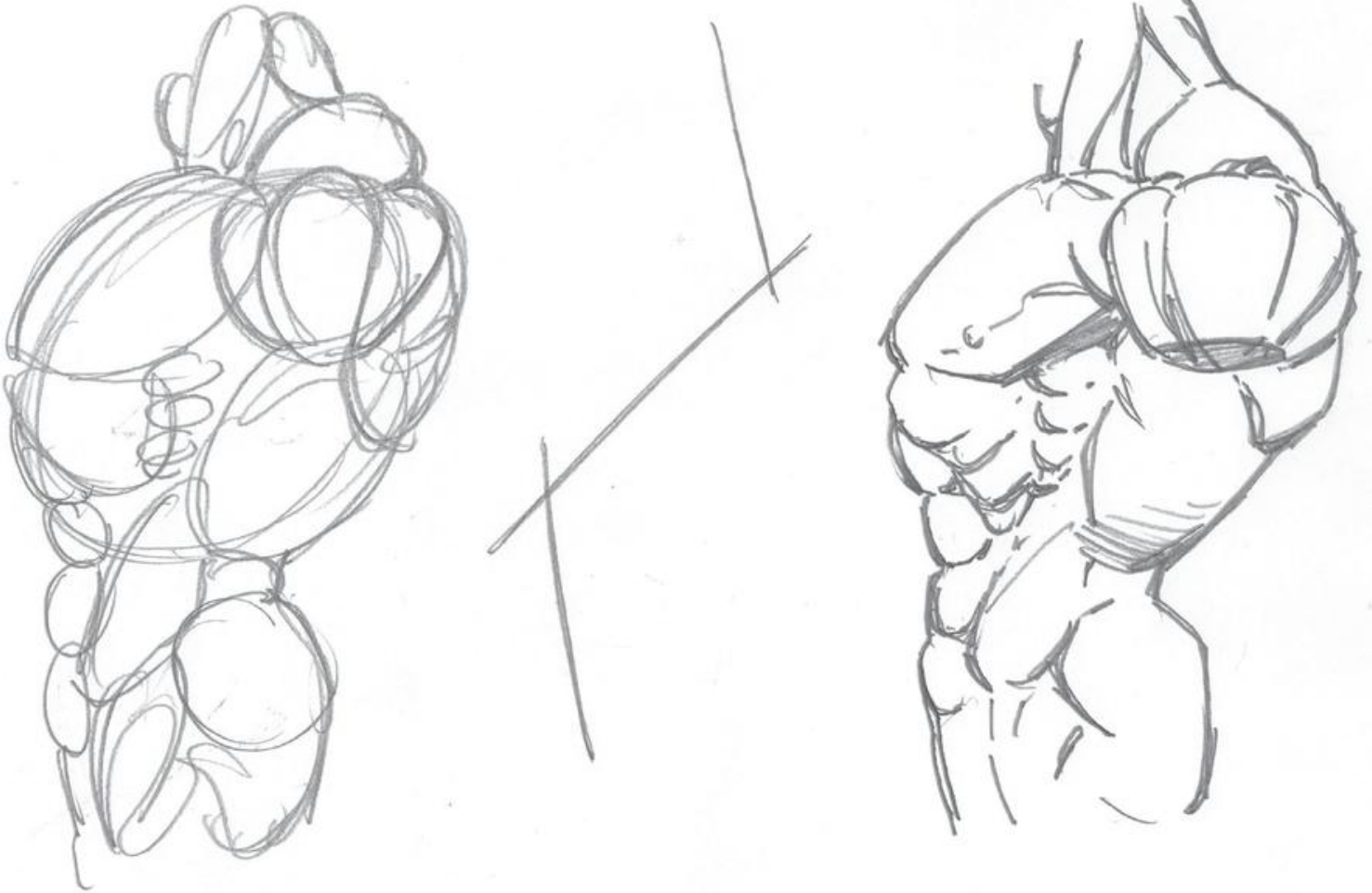
- Look at the bubble side torso penciled below at left.

See if you can pick out the muscles and shapes from the front view in this drawing. Notice how they changed when looking at them from the side.

Try to picture the front view to the left in your mind, then picture it turning slowly to this side view... It's important to build a clear 3D picture in your head of a figure's proportion and anatomy to draw it correctly from many different poses and angles called upon in the drawing of even one comic book.

For now, try to picture the 3D shape of the pectoral in your mind... now try it with all of the different bubble muscle shapes.

When you are drawing a side view, keep in mind the slopes I have indicated above. These slopes represent the spine, which is curved in everyone.



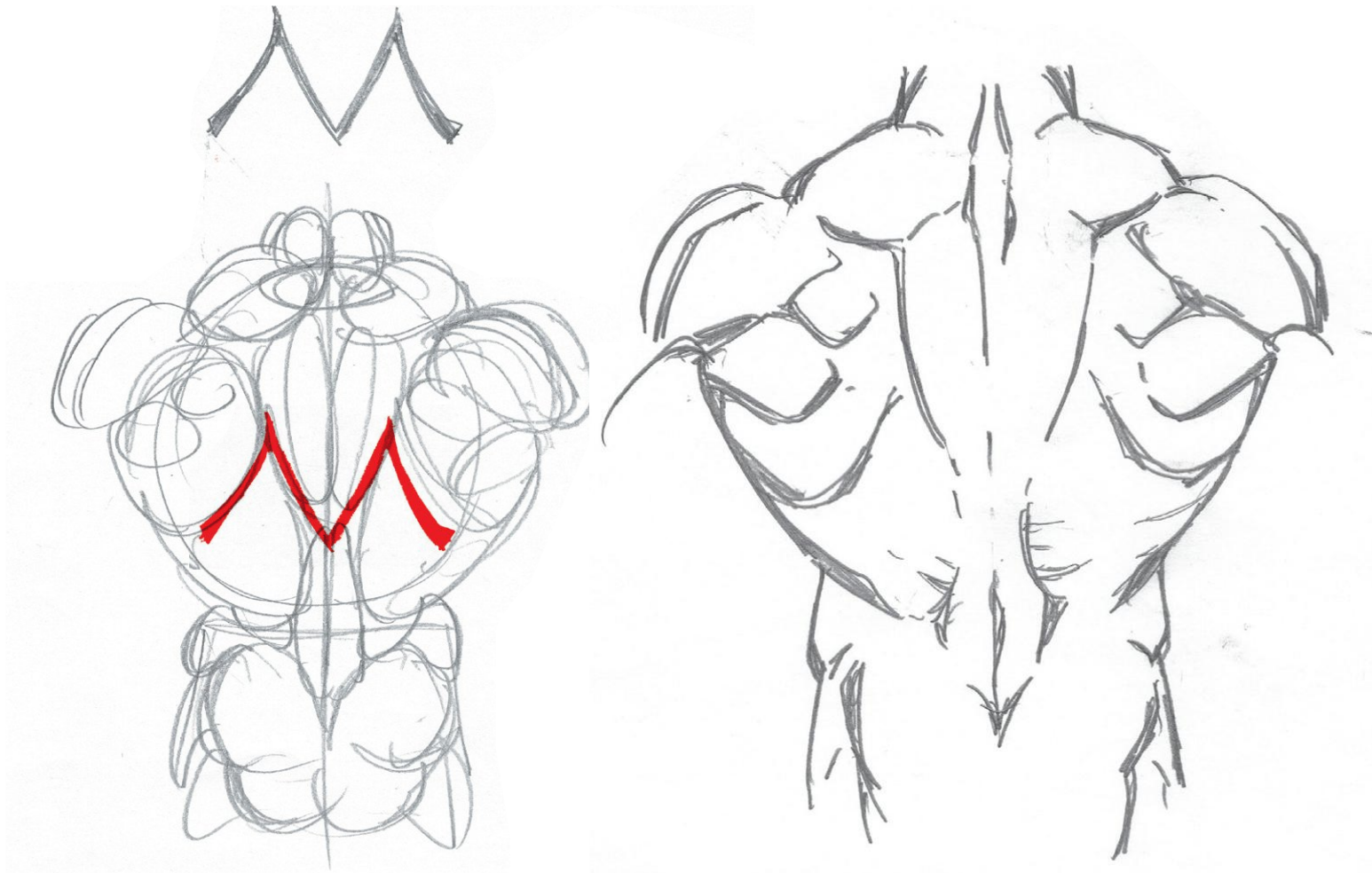
- Above at right we have a more finished drawing based on the side-view bubble muscled torso. Notice how the rounded bubble shapes have been angled to give that hardness and strength heroic bodies require.



#2 THE TORSO

THE BACK - The poor back is probably the most poorly drawn part of the body in comics. I groan every time I pick up a comic and notice someone abusing this exciting, powerful, potentially super-muscled piece of anatomy. I am not talking about it being badly drawn, it's just that the back should be as massive and thick with muscles as say the chest, shoulders and arms.

Okay, enough of that...



- Look at the bubble drawing to the left; you can probably just make out the lightly indicated important rib-cage underneath all of the bubble masses.

The back is a little tougher than the front side; the bubbles are a little harder to place.

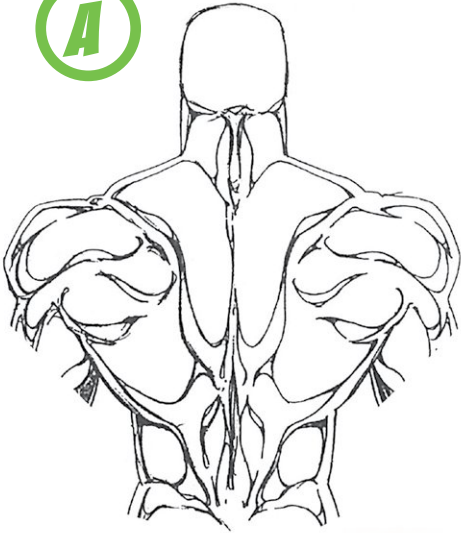
Notice the M-shape printed over the back drawing. It is from this M, seen in the middle of the back, that you should position your bubble shapes.

Now picture that side view in your 3D head and turn it until it becomes the back view. Understand the slab shape of the lats; the minor L-shape of the two trapeziums (the two L-shaped muscles that start in the middle of the back and continue upward, spreading, becoming the two almost football-shaped bubbles that straddle the spine and sit on the top of the rib-cage).

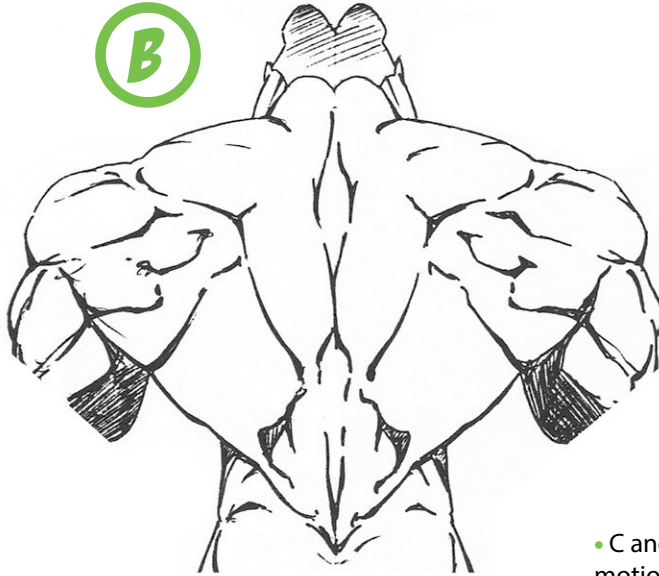
#2 THE TORSO



A



B



- More images of back musculature – note how the forms of A and B are very similar, even though the proportions are wildly different... also pay attention to how the two different rendering styles delineate the form. Can you spot the M-shape in each?

C



- C and D illustrate the back in motion. In C, notice how the muscles of the back spread as the arms go up over the head – spot the subtle, more spread M? D illustrates the back twisting, pay attention to how the long muscles of the back flow from the waist/butt around the spine to the shoulders... see the twisted M-shape?

D



- Look at Brute here, flexing –

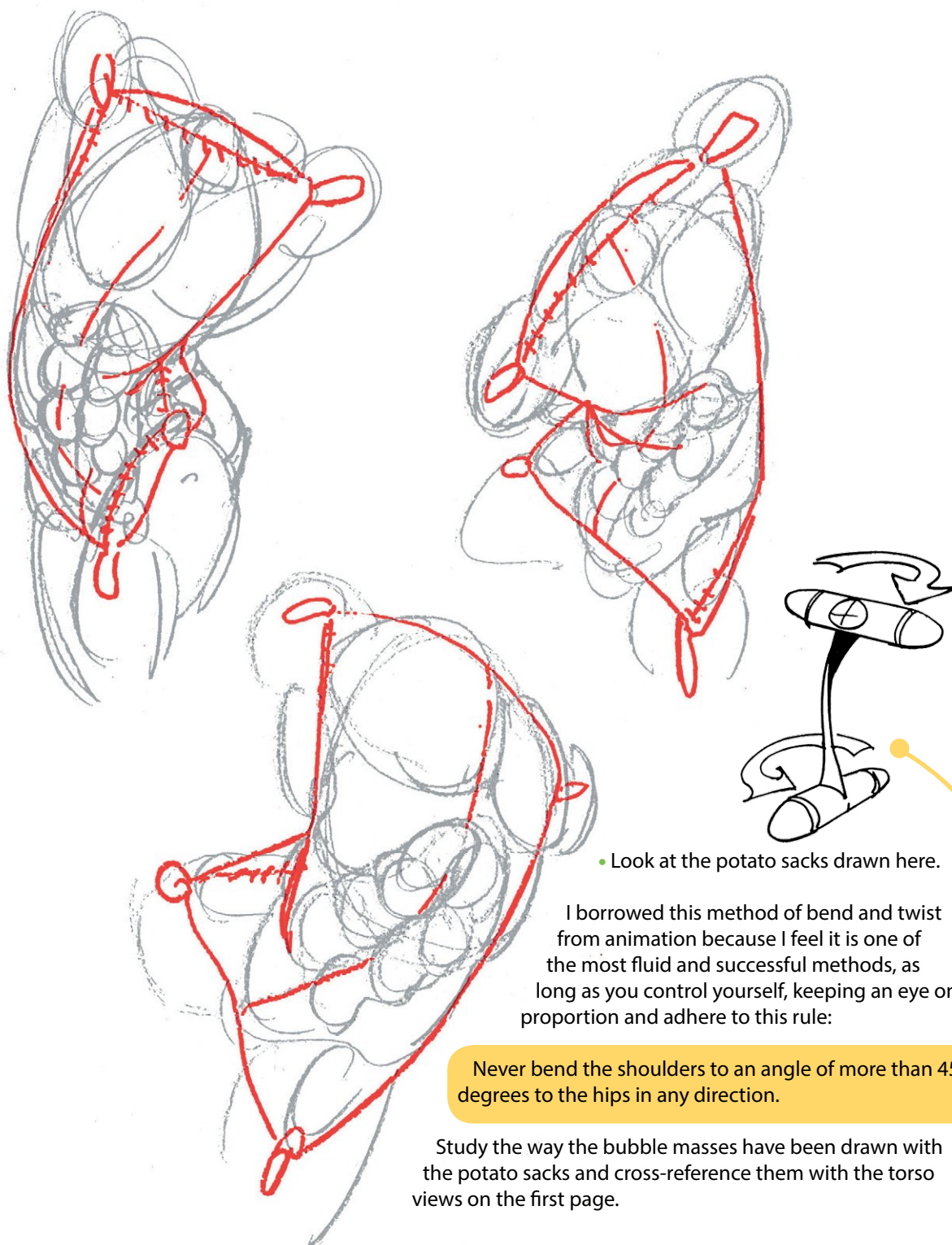
Be aware that the muscles of the back move with the arms as well as the torso.





#2 THE TORSO

THE POTATO SACK - The hardest trick to drawing a powerful torso is correctly bending and twisting the body. You have to be sure to bend the body, to create tension and dynamics, but not to bend the body so far as to put your poor hero into traction.



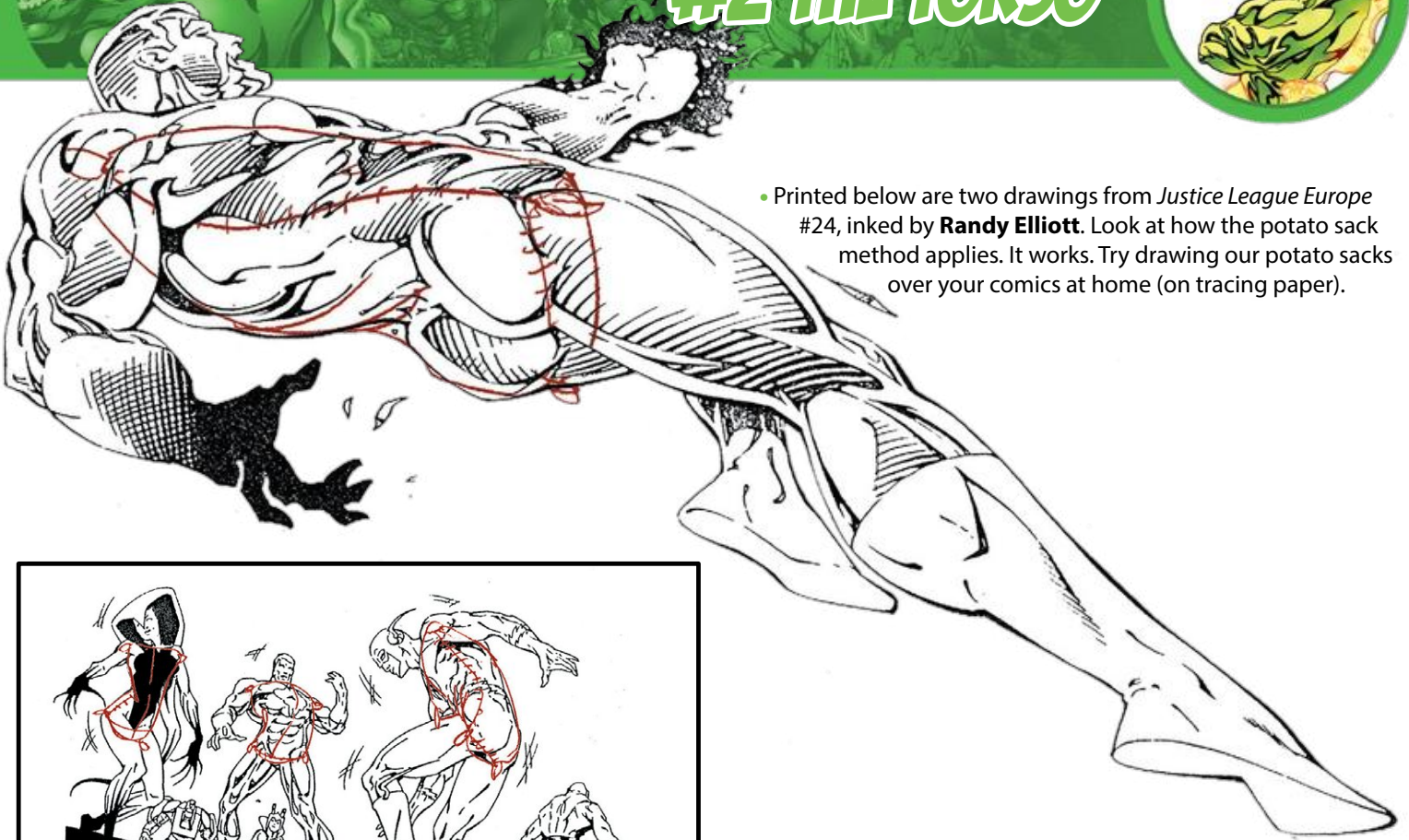
- Look at the potato sacks drawn here.

I borrowed this method of bend and twist from animation because I feel it is one of the most fluid and successful methods, as long as you control yourself, keeping an eye on proportion and adhere to this rule:

Never bend the shoulders to an angle of more than 45 degrees to the hips in any direction.

Study the way the bubble masses have been drawn with the potato sacks and cross-reference them with the torso views on the first page.

#2 THE TORSO



- Printed below are two drawings from *Justice League Europe* #24, inked by **Randy Elliott**. Look at how the potato sack method applies. It works. Try drawing our potato sacks over your comics at home (on tracing paper).



Here's a short but sweeeet tip...

If you want to draw comics, then draw! Not just now and again, but every waking, conscious moment. Become addicted to drawing, and...

...DRAW! DRAW! DRAW!



#3 THE POTATO SACK

BRUTES AND BABES!

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS
BY BART SEARS

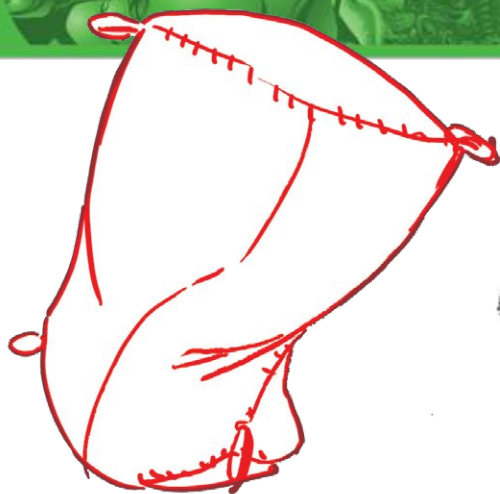
Hi...once again I'd like to welcome you to this the third chapter of *Brutes and Babes*.

After I finished chapter two, I realized there was more work to do on the potato sack, more information to "peel" back... get it? Potato... peel...? Anyhow, here's some more info on the potato sack, and a quick look at the female head...

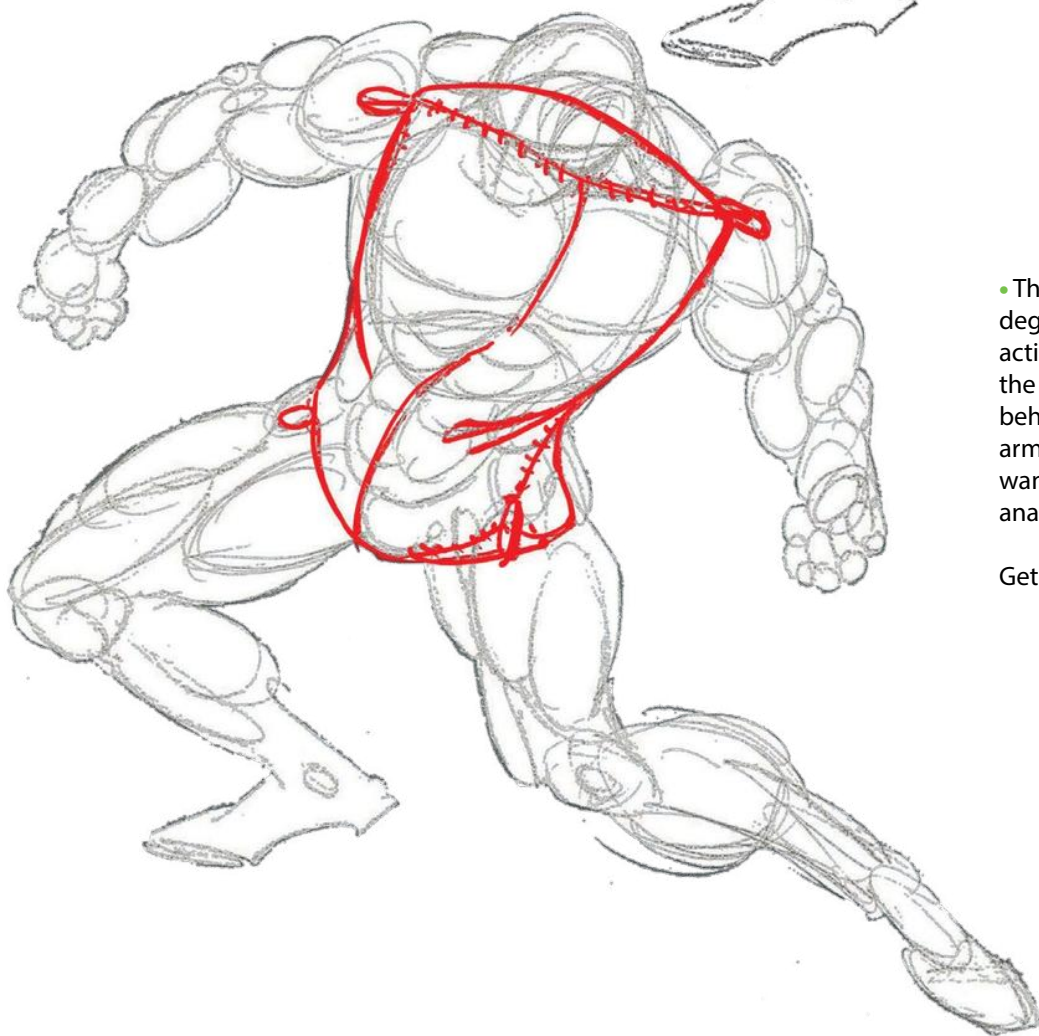
...let's get to it!



#3 THE POTATO SACK



Here we have a nice, action-filled BUBBLE figure. Look carefully at the potato sack printed over the torso area.



- There is really not a lot of twist (about 30 degrees), but, quite a bit of movement and action is implied. I could have exaggerated the twist by throwing his left arm back behind his body and by thrusting his right arm across the front of his torso, but I wanted to leave his torso clear to show the anatomy of the twist.

Get some tracing paper and check it out!



#3 THE POTATO SACK



- The Wolverine shown here was drawn over the bubble figure above. Please notice how the lines are hardened and edged, almost chiseled from stone... muscle isn't bloopy! See how the individual muscles aren't outlined, there's just an impression of the whole indicated.

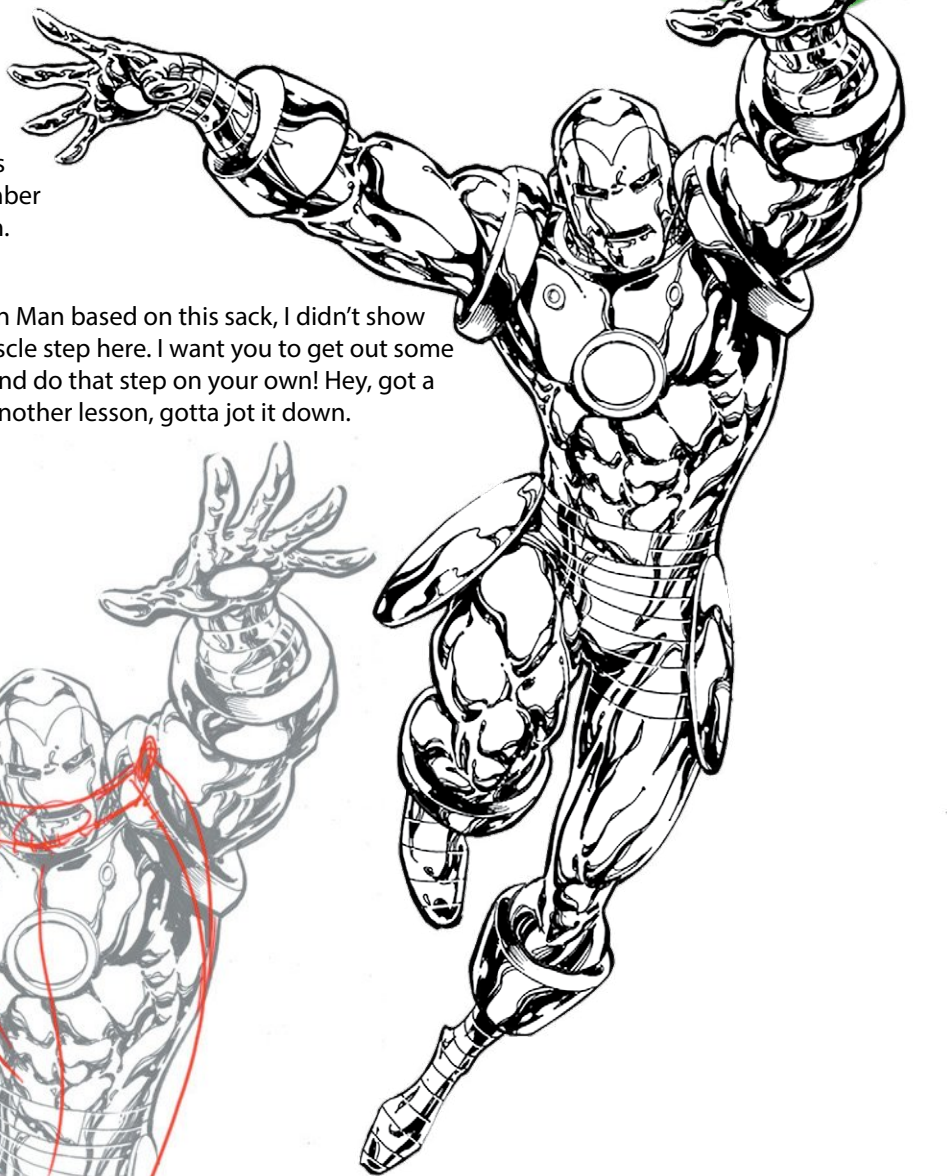
Particular finishing styles don't matter at this stage, only good, solid drawing counts. Start on your own potato sacks and bubble twist figures.

#3 THE POTATO SACK

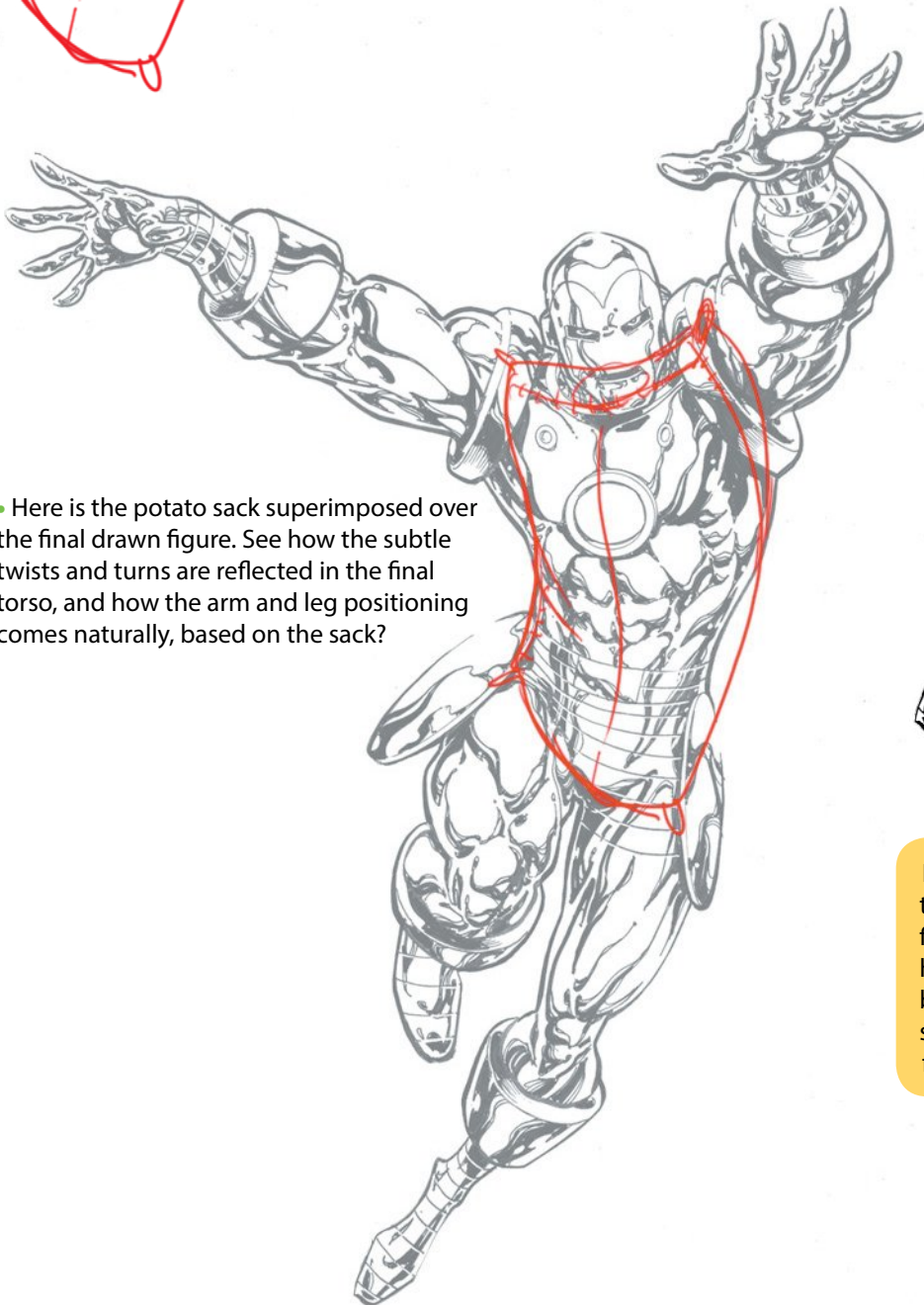


- Yep, it's a potato sack. This sack could lead to any number of correct figures in motion.

- I drew this Iron Man based on this sack, I didn't show the bubble muscle step here. I want you to get out some tracing paper and do that step on your own! Hey, got a good idea for another lesson, gotta jot it down.



- Here is the potato sack superimposed over the final drawn figure. See how the subtle twists and turns are reflected in the final torso, and how the arm and leg positioning comes naturally, based on the sack?



Even though there are rigid methods to drawing figures, you don't want your figures to be rigid; you want them to flow, heck, even overflow with life. Don't get bogged down in the reeds. The potato sack helps remind us the human figure is flexible and moves...use it!

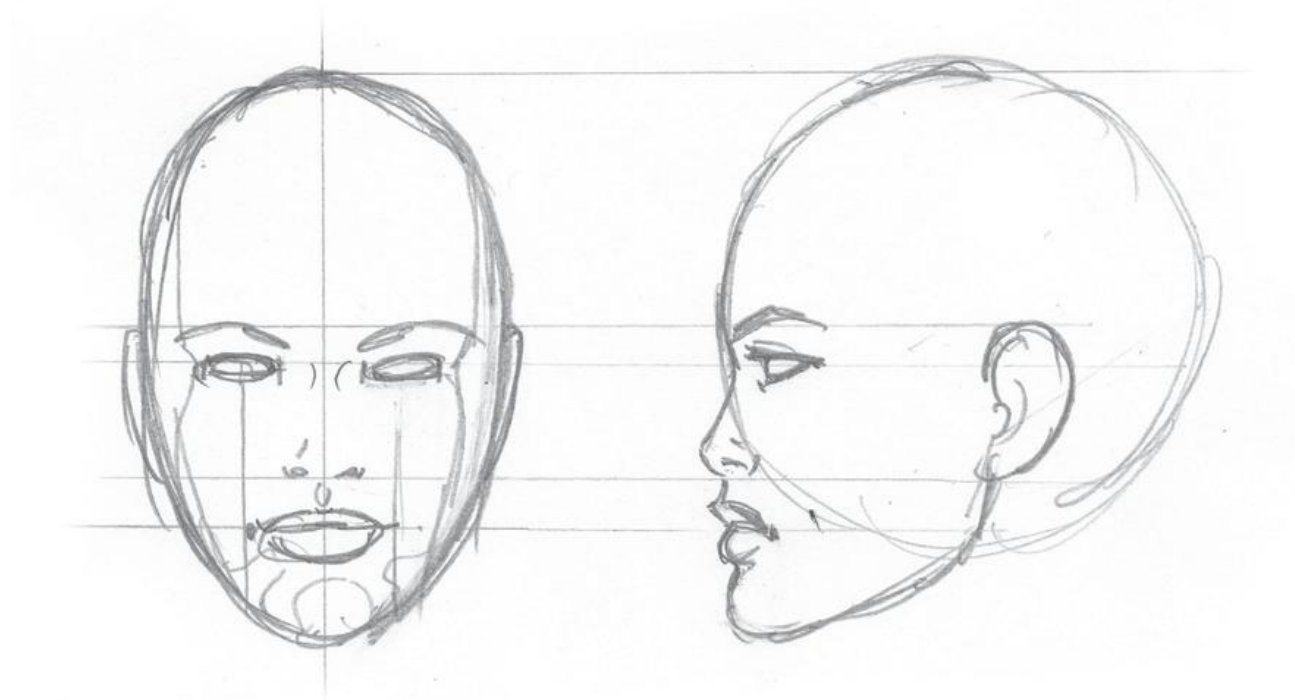


#3 BABE HEADS

Drawing attractive or even unattractive female faces is at best a tricky, difficult process. It isn't enough to learn one pretty face and just draw it over with different hair and/or costume distinctions. Each female face that you draw should have as much individuality, as much character and life as each male face that you can imagine. Also, contrary to popular belief, not every woman in comics is or should be a stunningly beautiful woman. I have been criticized for drawing Power Girl with a square jaw, but personally, on her rough-and-tumble, ready-to-brawl, full-of-vim and vigor personality, I felt that a strong square jaw was fitting and attractive. Enough of that, let's draw!



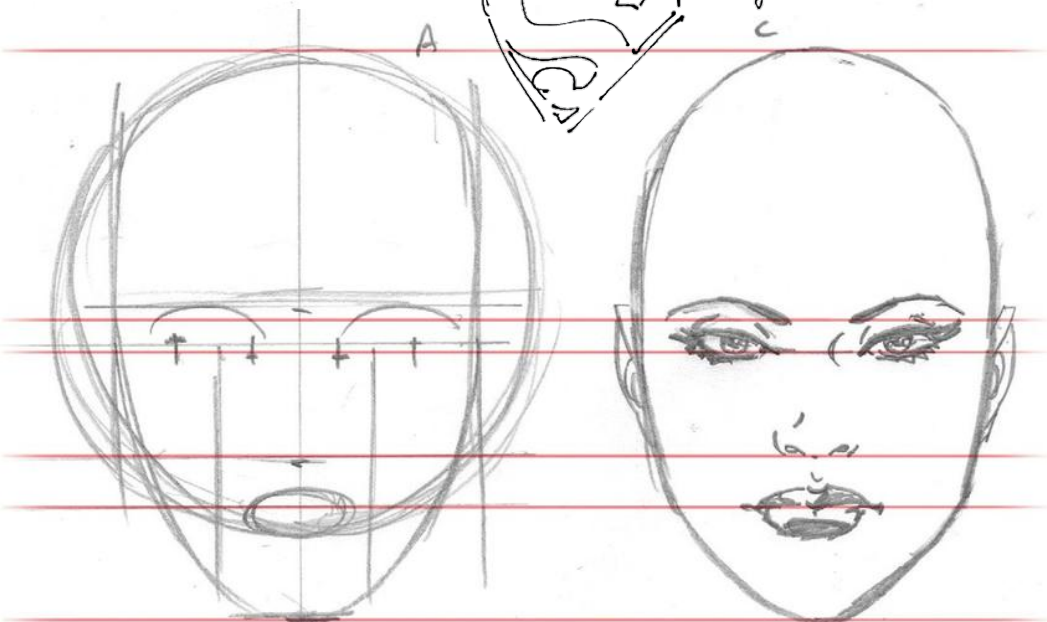
- The head is basically egg-shaped. Divide the head in half vertically and horizontally. Divide the EYE LINE (horizontal line) into five equal sections. Mark the point midway between the EYE LINE and the bottom of the egg-shape (the chin). Mark the point midway between the nose line and the chin. Drop two vertical lines from the middle of each "eye" fill in the features as shown. You now have a basic female head. Note how the proportion transfers to the side view.



#3 BABE HEADS



- Here I've drawn some different female heads. Please note how few lines are used to give form and expression. Always remember when drawing women, LESS IS MORE! Each line you add to a woman's face adds five years to her age. Study each head, pick the difference between each face and why they are attractive or unattractive. Then practice drawing them yourself. Dissect them and learn!

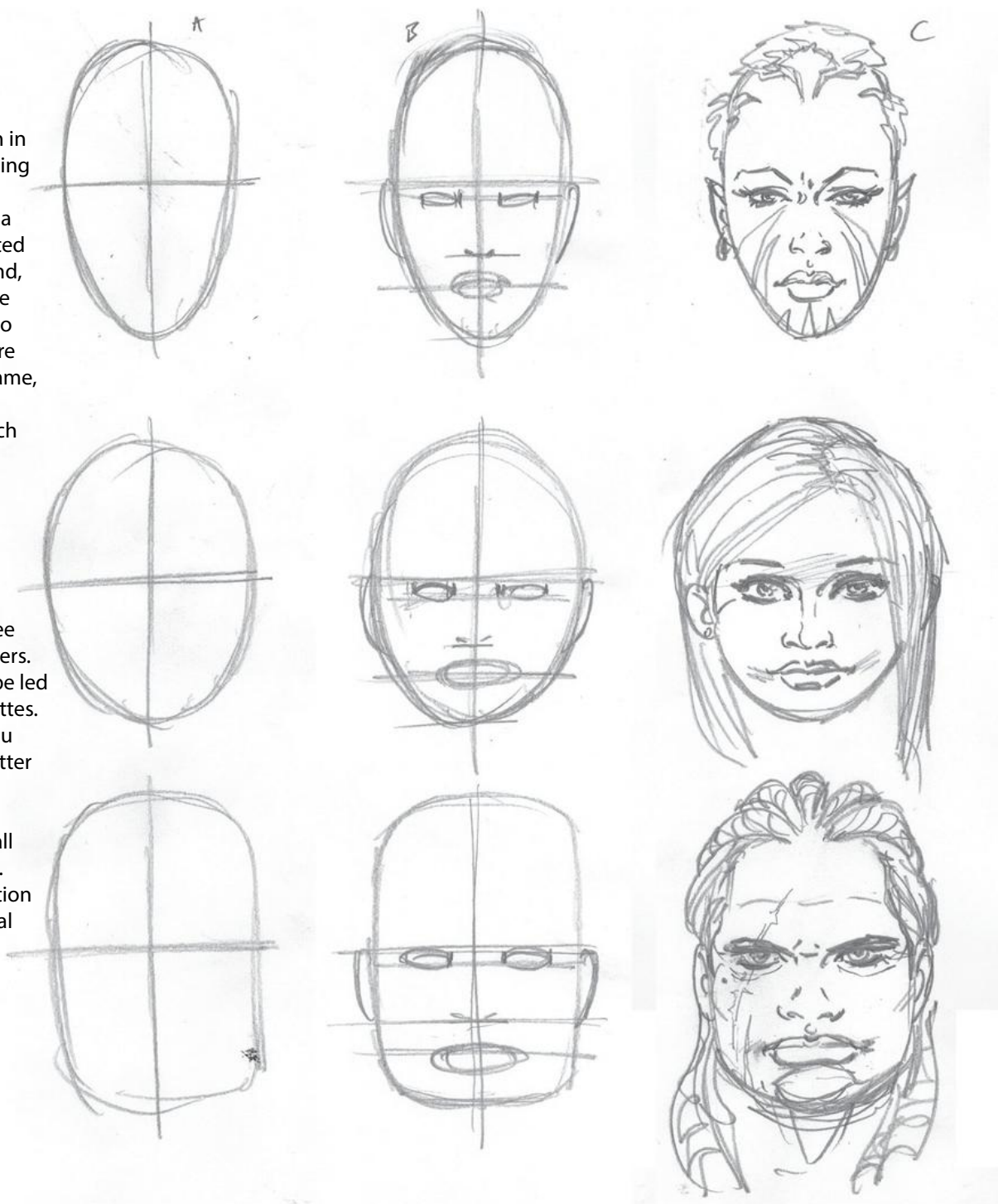




#3 BABE HEADS

• Here we have three very differently-proportioned faces, none of them drawn in the classic manner of starting with a circle. For each of these heads I started with a simple shape; one elongated and skinny, one more round, and one more square. Note that the proportion used to place and designate feature positioning remains the same, but how differently those proportions appear on each head.

• At the end you have three distinctive female characters. Note how each basic shape led to very distinctive silhouettes. Keep in mind that how you break up the head, no matter the shape; in halves, then the measures where you place eyes, nose, etc. are all proportionately the same. This uniformity of proportion makes for relatively normal looking people.



Thanks for reading. I hope you can learn something from these "lessons." It is difficult for me to try to convey enough information in this limited space, but please bear with me. I will do the very best that I can. Next we dig deeper into the art of drawing hot babes.

#4 HOT BABES



BRUTES AND BABES!

**DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS
BY BART SEARS**

In this chapter, we're going to take a look at women. Last month we took a quick look at women's heads, this month we will look at the body.

Super-women might look simple, but to do them right takes a lot of knowledge and a lot of practice. So warm up those pencils and...

...let's get to it!





#4 HOT BABES



HOT BABES - Take a look at the woman drawn to the left.

Notice the supple smoothness of her body, the subtle curve of the line.

Remember when we were drawing super-brutes and I stressed the importance of angling the line and giving the muscles that hard, chiseled edge? Well, the exact opposite applies to super-women.

You have to be careful not to draw them bloopy or dumpy, but at the same time, if you draw them too hard and chiseled, they start to look masculine, which is definitely not good.



- Check the images of super-women here, two attractive, healthy females in street clothes, walking down a street with clearly different body types, but each looks fit without being chiseled. And the Scarlet Witch, powerful, in great physical shape, but all done with smooth, flowing lines –no bloop, no droop, no chisel!

#4 HOT BABES



- **Less is more.** When drawing women, always remember to keep it simple.

A general rule; use less line/linework when you are drawing women. Each line you add, on a face or a body, can add years of age to the character and it will detract from the woman's overall beauty. Just remember, each woman that you draw is a different character and each character has their own visual needs and cues.

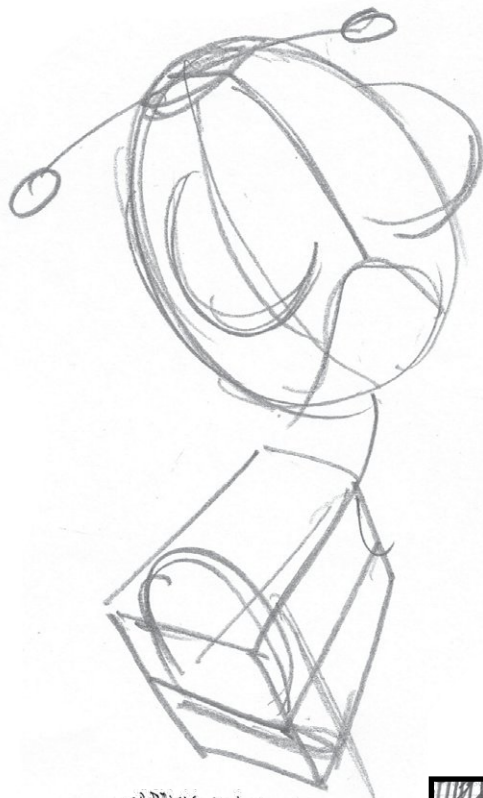


- Whatever I say, in this *Brutes and Babes*, or in any other segment, is not a hard-and-fast rule, but just a broad guideline to help teach you the basics of comic book illustration.

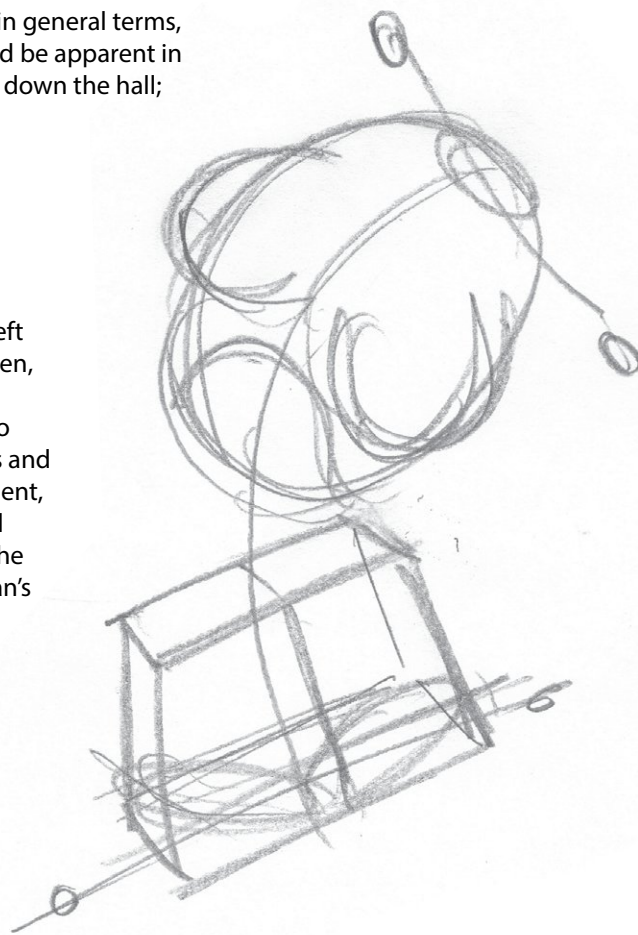


#4 HOT BABES

• When you are drawing women, always keep in mind that, in general terms, women are more graceful and sensual than men. This should be apparent in your drawings. As an example, BABE would glide or saunter down the hall; BRUTE would stride or stomp down it.



• Look at the drawings to the left and right. When drawing women, sitting, standing, walking or whatever, it's more attractive to draw them with opposing hips and shoulders. This creates movement, giving the character life as well as generating a nice curve to the body, which adds to the woman's attractiveness.



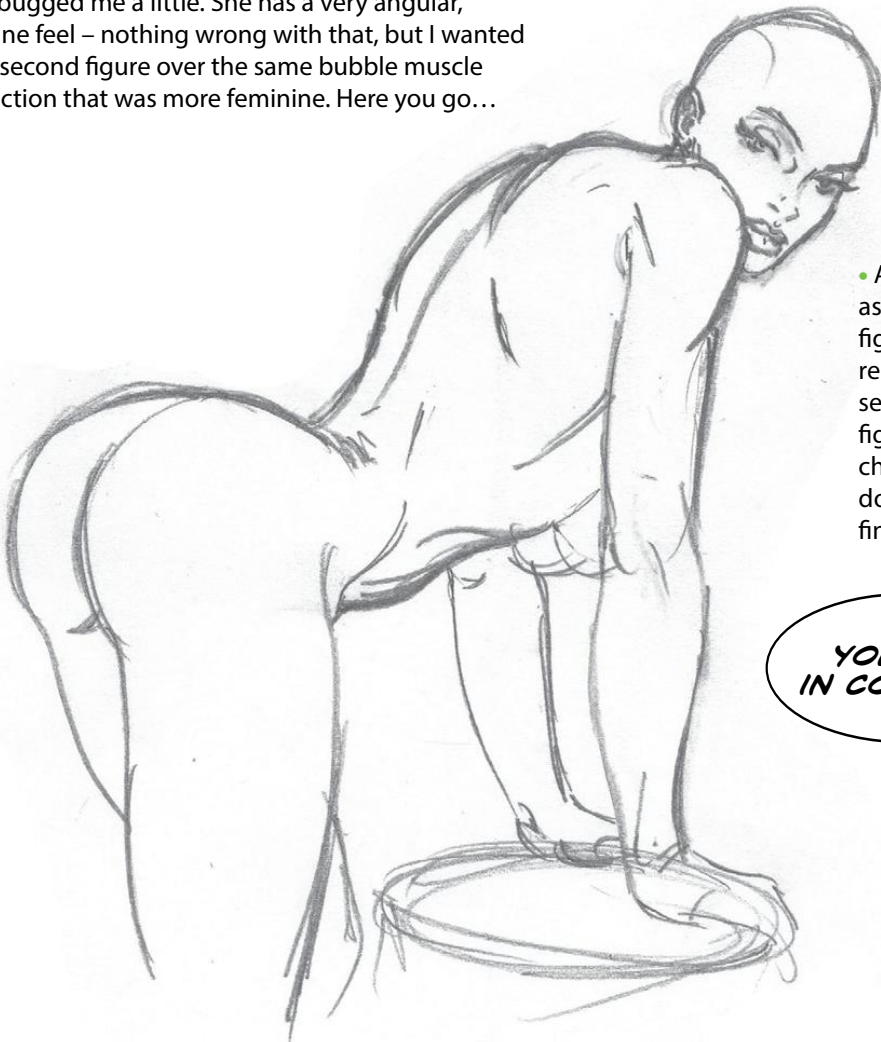
• Here are a few examples of the rule of opposing hips and shoulders. It can be subtle (and most often should be!) but the effect is rewarding. Your female figures look more real, look like they have weight and exist in the world you are creating, and they have a certain grace. Check the cropped figure in the panel from DC's *Eclipso*. Always remember to draw through – just because a figure might be cropped, don't cheat the pose! Something to keep in mind: opposing shoulders and hips apply to men as well – it's how people move! Hey, men can be graceful too!

#4 HOT BABES



- Here I have drawn a small bubble figure and then a larger finished version over the bubble framework. See how the potato sack still works? Also notice that even though we can't see most of her left arm in the finished drawing, it is still drawn in the bubble figure. This is called **DRAW THROUGH**. It is a very important part of illustrating. Drawing through helps you to line up all the components of each drawing, making sure that proportion placement is correct. Always draw through!

- The more finished figure to the right above has always bugged me a little. She has a very angular, masculine feel – nothing wrong with that, but I wanted to do a second figure over the same bubble muscle construction that was more feminine. Here you go...



- Always remember that you control every aspect of your drawing, from initial layout, figure pose, figure construction lighting, final rendering style – everything. You can clearly see here how, from the very same bubble figure construction two very different female characters emerged. Keep that in mind! If you don't like how you finished something, just finish it again!

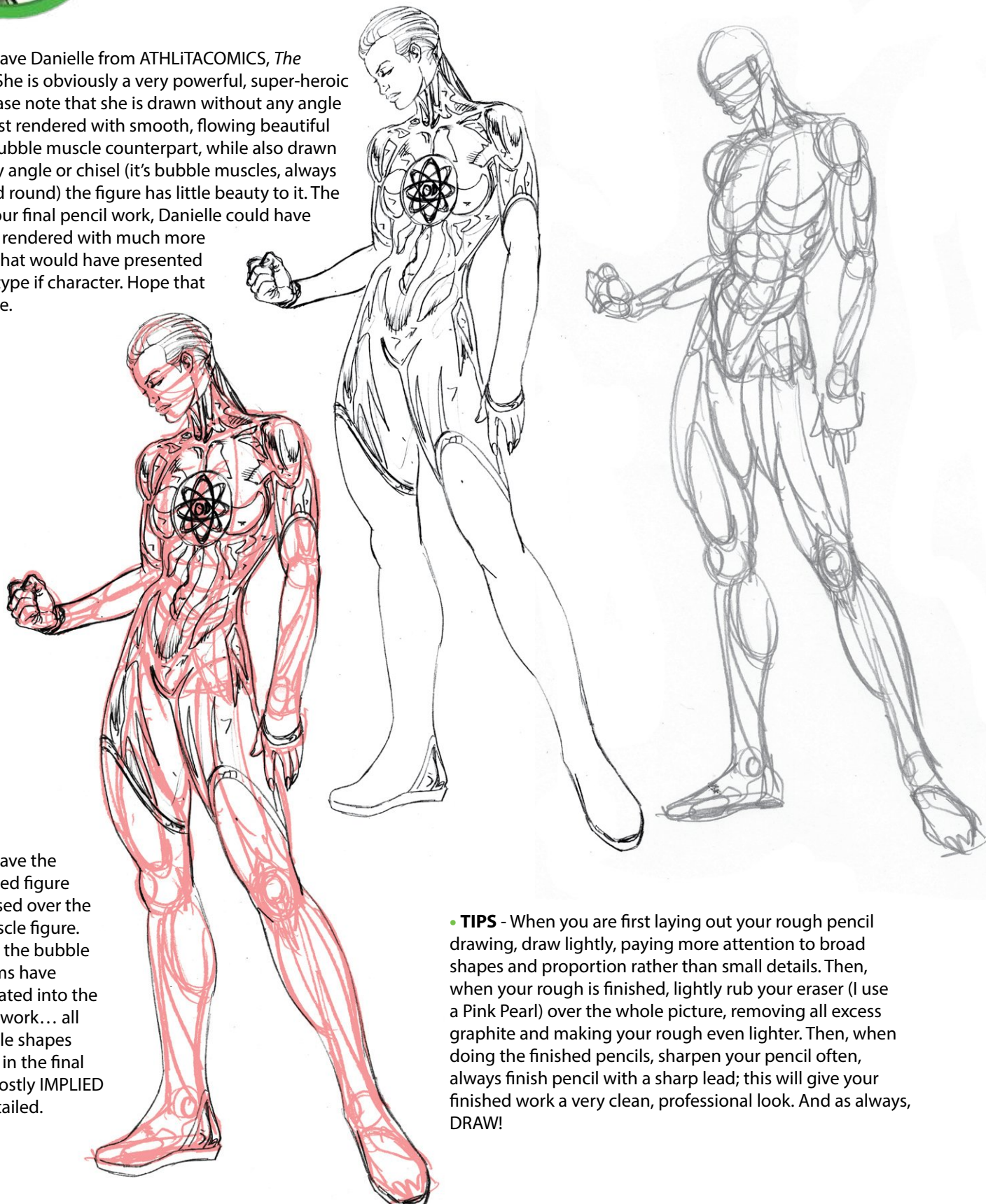
**YOU ARE
IN CONTROL.**





#4 HOT BABES

• Here we have Danielle from ATHLiTACOMICS, *The Protectors*. She is obviously a very powerful, super-heroic female. Please note that she is drawn without any angle or chisel, just rendered with smooth, flowing beautiful lines. Her bubble muscle counterpart, while also drawn without any angle or chisel (it's bubble muscles, always smooth and round) the figure has little beauty to it. The trick is in your final pencil work, Danielle could have easily been rendered with much more chisel, but that would have presented a different type of character. Hope that makes sense.



• Here we have the final rendered figure superimposed over the bubble muscle figure. Notice how the bubble muscle forms have been translated into the final pencil work... all those muscle shapes are present in the final drawing, mostly IMPLIED and not detailed.

• **TIPS** - When you are first laying out your rough pencil drawing, draw lightly, paying more attention to broad shapes and proportion rather than small details. Then, when your rough is finished, lightly rub your eraser (I use a Pink Pearl) over the whole picture, removing all excess graphite and making your rough even lighter. Then, when doing the finished pencils, sharpen your pencils often, always finish pencil with a sharp lead; this will give your finished work a very clean, professional look. And as always, DRAW!

#5 STORYTELLING



BRUTES AND BABES!

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS
BY BART SEARS

Hello,

Welcome to *Brutes and Babes*. In this, the fifth chapter, I thought that it was about time to get to the heart of drawing powerful comics; it was time to talk about storytelling.

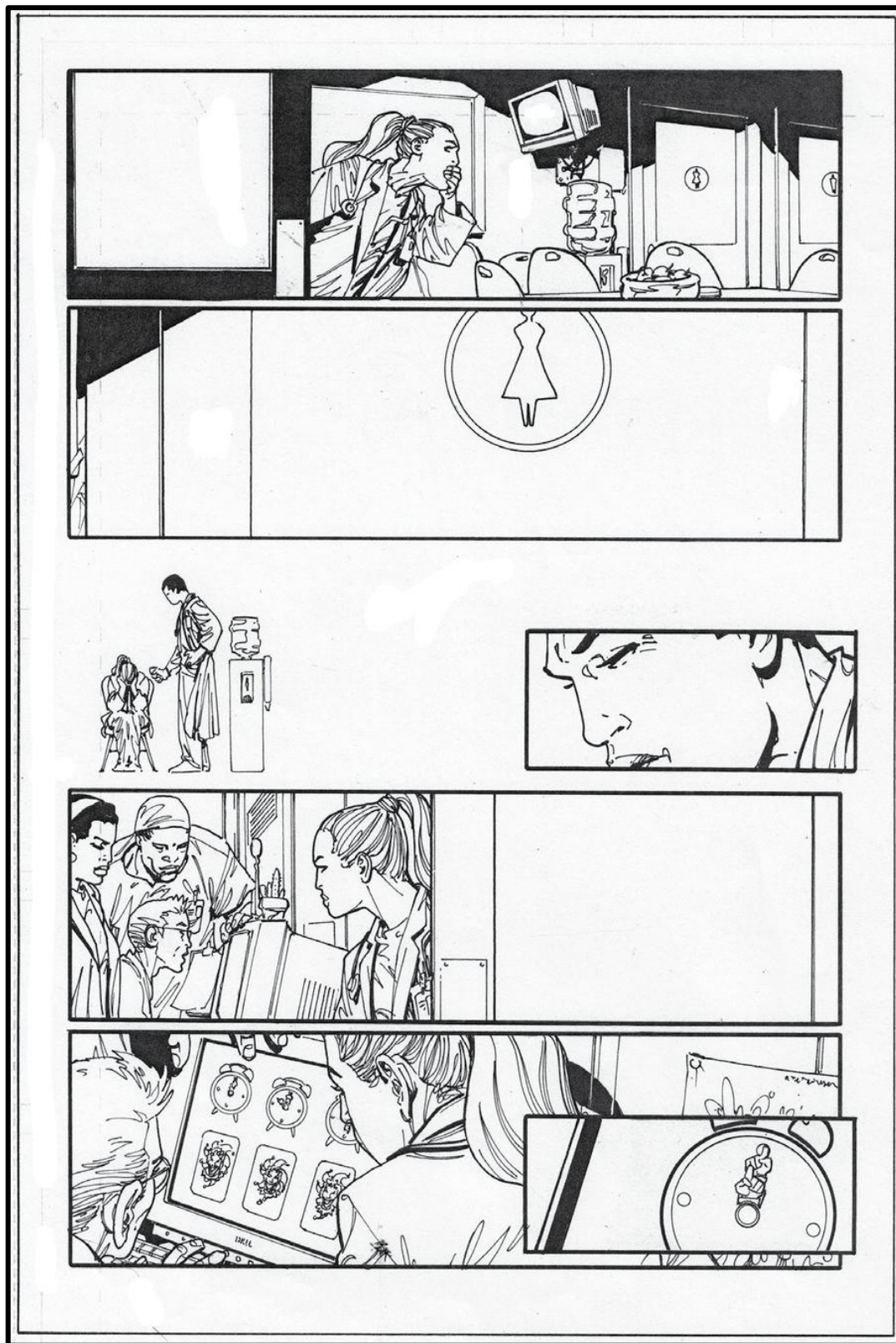
So buckle up and...

...let's get to it!





#5 STORYTELLING



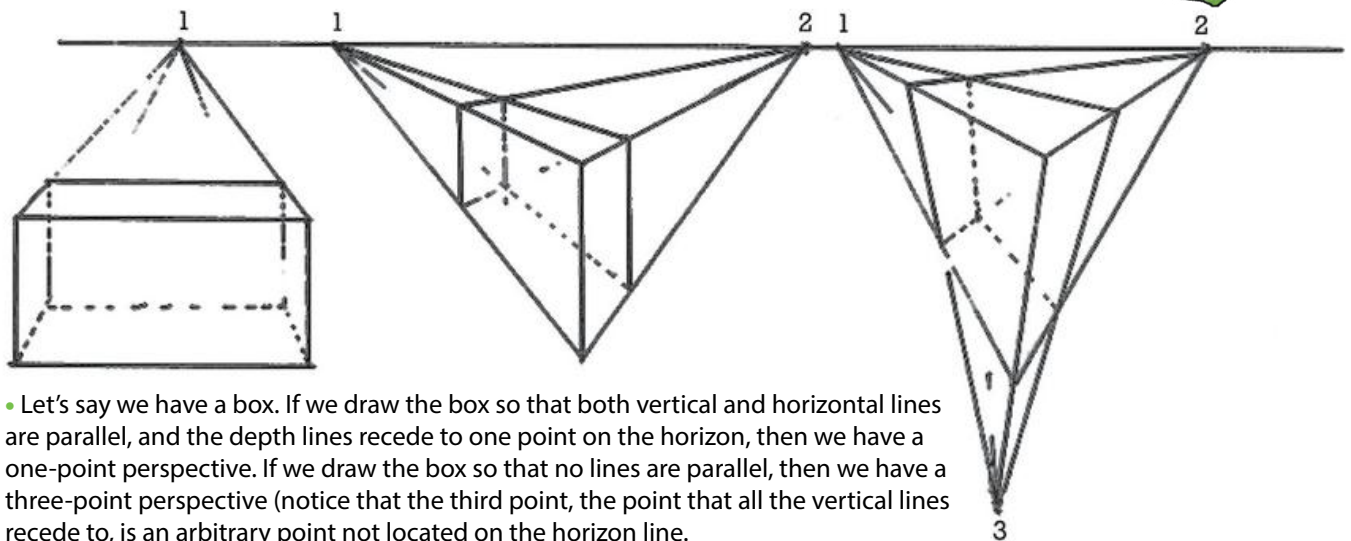
STORYTELLING - It's a bit pretentious of me to sit here and teach storytelling to you when there are masters of it out there (Joe Kubert and Will Eisner, to name two) from whom I would be grateful to learn a fraction of what they've forgotten. But, that notwithstanding, I'll plod ahead and we'll see what happens.

- The art of telling a story with pictures must be clear and readable; you cannot confuse the reader and things must flow smoothly. Panel to panel, page to page, your picture should create a rhythm, slowing down and speeding up the pace of a story to carry the reader along precisely as you and the writer intend. The way you pose your characters must appear believable, as must the way these characters interact with each other and their environments. You can't confuse the reader as to who's who (costumes don't count) by switching people around the panel indiscriminately. Now, to make all this even tougher, you have to find a way to do this which builds tension, drama, and mood, and is just plain knockout exciting! That's storytelling, in short.

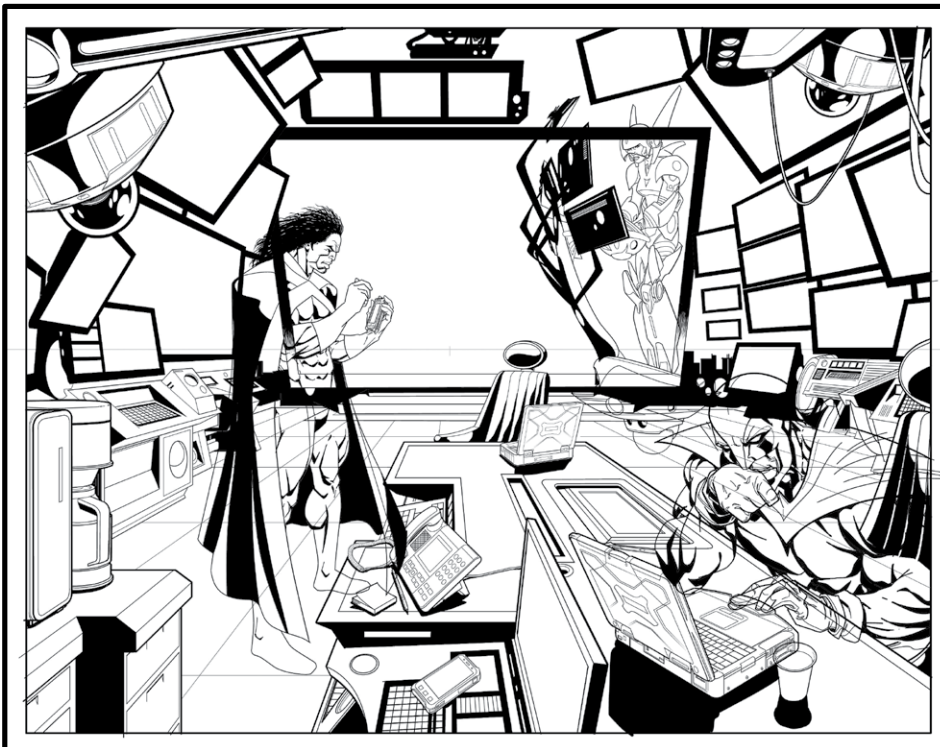
#5 STORYTELLING

PERSPECTIVE - Everything has perspective. Everything you could ever want to draw, from cars to horses, from building to oceans, from alien worlds to spacecraft to plain old superheroes. It could be a very flat perspective or a very warped, dynamic perspective, such as in this shot of BABE drawn to the right.

When drawing a person in such an extreme perspective, many body parts are closer to the viewer (the viewer being whoever is looking at the drawing). When drawing a figure in this type of perspective, we refer to it as foreshortening.



- Let's say we have a box. If we draw the box so that both vertical and horizontal lines are parallel, and the depth lines recede to one point on the horizon, then we have a one-point perspective. If we draw the box so that no lines are parallel, then we have a three-point perspective (notice that the third point, the point that all the vertical lines recede to, is an arbitrary point not located on the horizon line).



- **ONE-, TWO-, AND THREE-POINT PERSPECTIVE** - Wherever you are sitting or standing, if you could look outward and see the curve of the earth (imagine you are on a calm ocean and can see the horizon clearly) you would be seeing what is called the horizon line, also know as the eye-level line. This is the line to which all one- and two-point perspectives you will ever draw must flow (or most all; when we cover perspective in more depth, you'll see what I mean).
- There could conceivably be one vanishing point (the spot to which the perspective lines meet along the horizon line) or thousands of vanishing points in each and every drawing that you design.

• Note: Study this and practice. You must know perspective to draw comics (I'll go more in depth on this in later chapters).



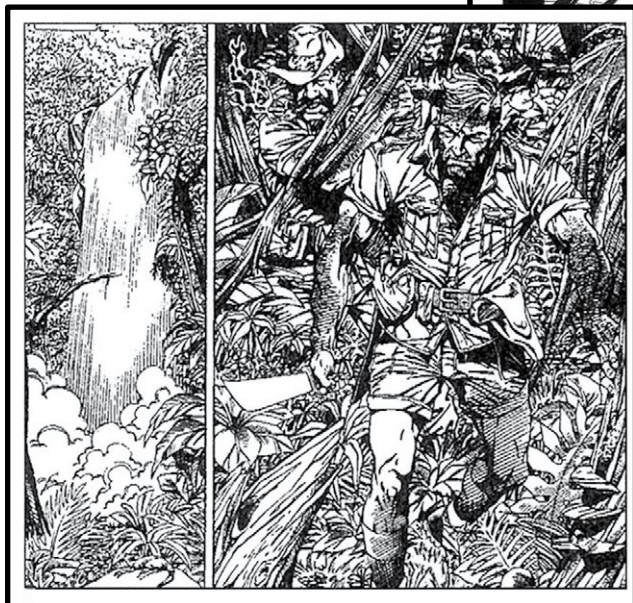
#5 STORYTELLING

- A very important (and often overlooked) element is detail. By “detail” I don’t mean a lot of noodly nonsensical lines to fill space, but the correct dressing for the world your characters inhabit, such as proper windows, floor moldings, doors, door handles, cars, trucks, light switches, lamps, wallpaper, end tables, books, pens, mailboxes, lamp posts, fences, signs, etc. The list goes on and on.

- As examples, I’ve included the *Panzer* pin-up and below, a section from page 1 of DC’s *Eclipso: The Darkness Within*.

The *Panzer* pin-up is filled with made-up, sci-fi detail, but it’s all based on reality - it all looks like it works. It’s successful because you marry real-life detail: pouches, clasps, mechanical detail, with fantastical elements... real details make insane designs believable.

- All the details necessary are there: the belt and the pouches, socks, machete, canteen, broken trees and logs, little animals, fungus, vines, sweat, etc. It creates a very clear picture (inset inks by Randy Elliot).



#5 STORYTELLING

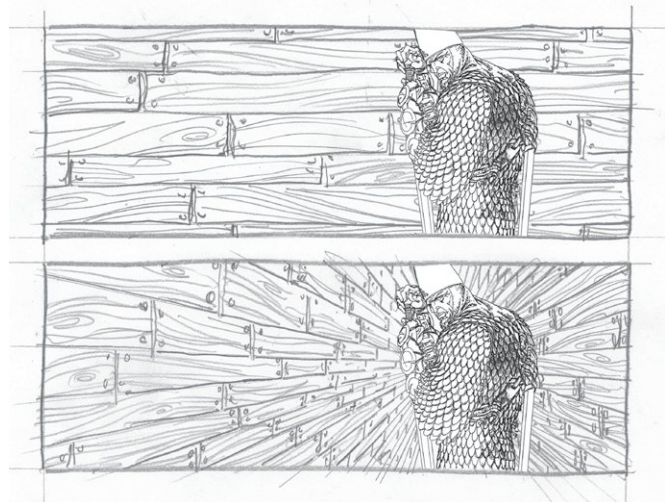


- To start, I want to thank and highlight Marcos Mateu-Mestre and his awesome work, *Framed Perspective* Volume 1. It is an extremely in-depth work on perspective and a must-have for every comic book artist, newbie and pro alike. I gleaned this nugget on explaining dynamics of perspective on storytelling right from its pages.

As a storytelling tool, perspective is more than just a way to draw a background. The perspective you choose and use in every panel has a practical purpose, and perhaps even a subliminal one. For instance, check out the two panels of Brute flying below. In both, Brute is flying over a city, but each gives you a different feeling of the whats and whys. The right-side version implies more speed, urgency and potential drama or danger than the left-side version, just by the choice of perspective. Nothing wrong with the left-side version... maybe more appropriate if Brute is just flying to meet Babe. The right-side version more appropriate if he's flying to join her in battle. Make sense?



- Check out the two panels with Arkon. After studying each, knowing nothing about the story behind the illustration, how does each one make you feel? Kinda cool, right? Perspective is some very cool stuff, all part of visual storytelling. Yeah, I know, it's deep. Ha!



#5 STORYTELLING

• Note the drawings to the right. See how in the second drawing the soda can seems to be much too big for the hand, but in the first drawing everything appears just right. Now this is a very simplistic illustration, but I hope it makes my point. If you have trouble drawing things to their proper scale, don't hesitate to find the object to see just how small or large it is in relation to your hand (or whatever) or your dad's. Always check things out, make a point of seeing how things relate to other things.



A

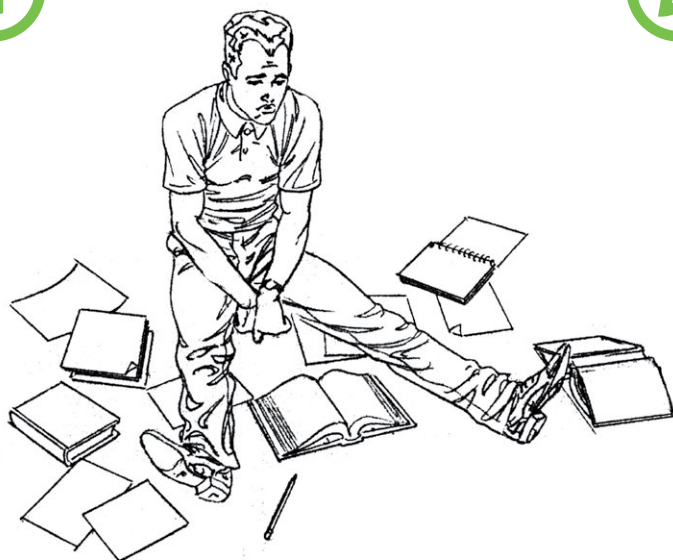


B



• I've used the same drawing to illustrate two different ways to look at and think about proportion. In the first example featuring *Deadland's* the Cackler, the Cackler and his horse are drawn in correct proportion. It looks correct in the second image of the Cackler he looks like either a giant or it looks like he's riding an old, tired miniature pony. The relative size of objects as they relate to each other matters! The second example is a little more subtle. The left side image shows a teenager, maybe 16, 17 or 18 years old. In the right side image by drawing his head slightly too large, that teenager has lost a few years, he could be a kid of 8, 9 or 10! Proportion is important!

A



B

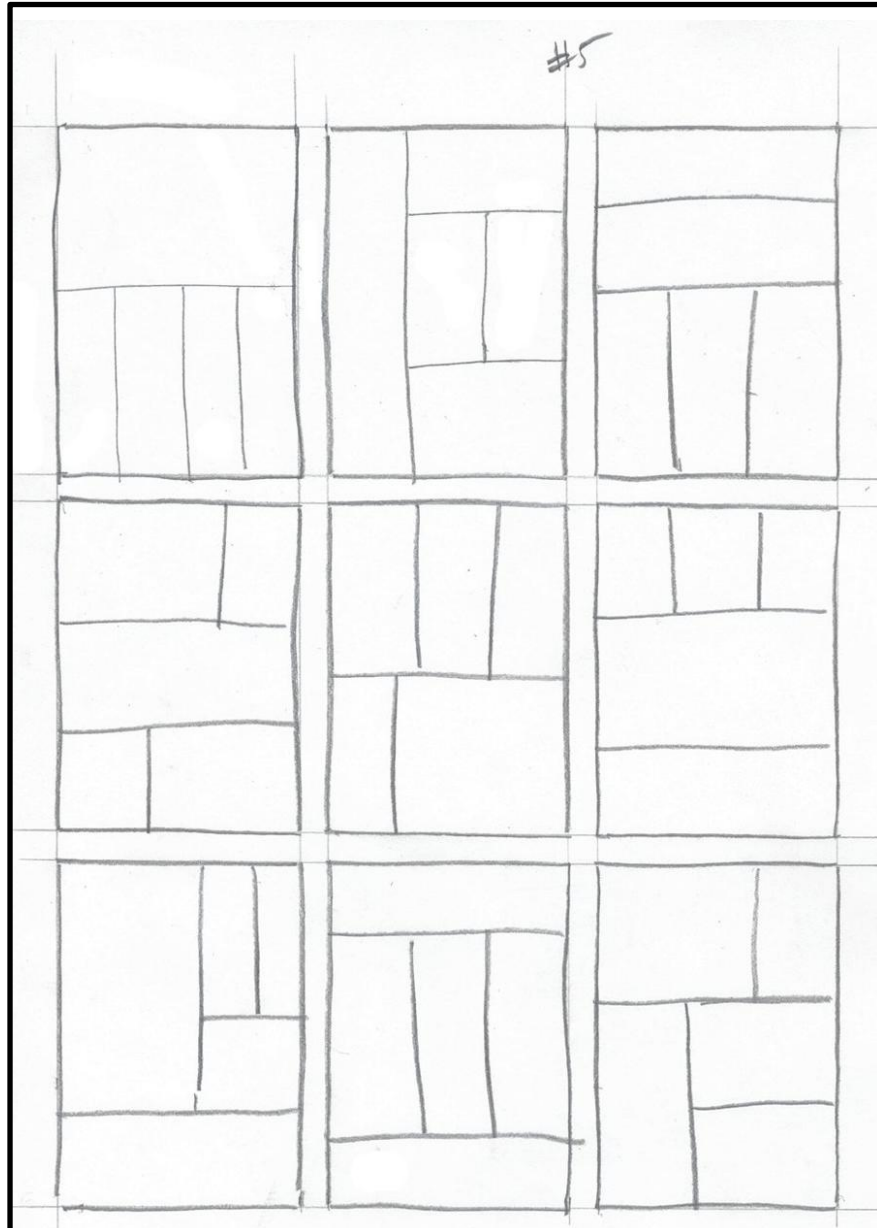


#5 STORYTELLING



LAYOUT AND DESIGN - Designing the layout for panels on a page can be quite difficult. Check out the nine different, five-panel layouts pictured below. The possibilities aren't endless, but there are more than a few. Read your plot or script, the panel you have decided will be your most important will guide you into the best panel layout for your page... and ALWAYS keep in mind which panels will have the most dialogue, and plan your page layout to be sure to include enough space!

- A funny: I remember a job once where I was working from plot and the writer called out in a panel to leave plenty of room for dialogue. Usually when you see that you can expect a nice soliloquy, so I left plenty of space, and, as I recall, when I saw the printed book – back in the day you seldom saw the work of the guy past you on the comic book creation chain – that panel had no dialogue. Don't know if the writer changed his mind, or if he was up against the deadline (more likely, hehehe), but I thought that was pretty funny.





#5 STORYTELLING

There are a few simple things to remember when designing within your panels... well, more than a few really. Below are some simple do's and do not's to keep in mind. Always remember, leave room for balloons (dialogue)!

• Now here are a few quick pointers on designing the interiors of your panels.

1 Never make the center of your panel the point of interest.

2 Never cut off a corner.

3 Never cut off an arm at the elbow or the hand.

4 Never cut off a figure at the knee or ankles.

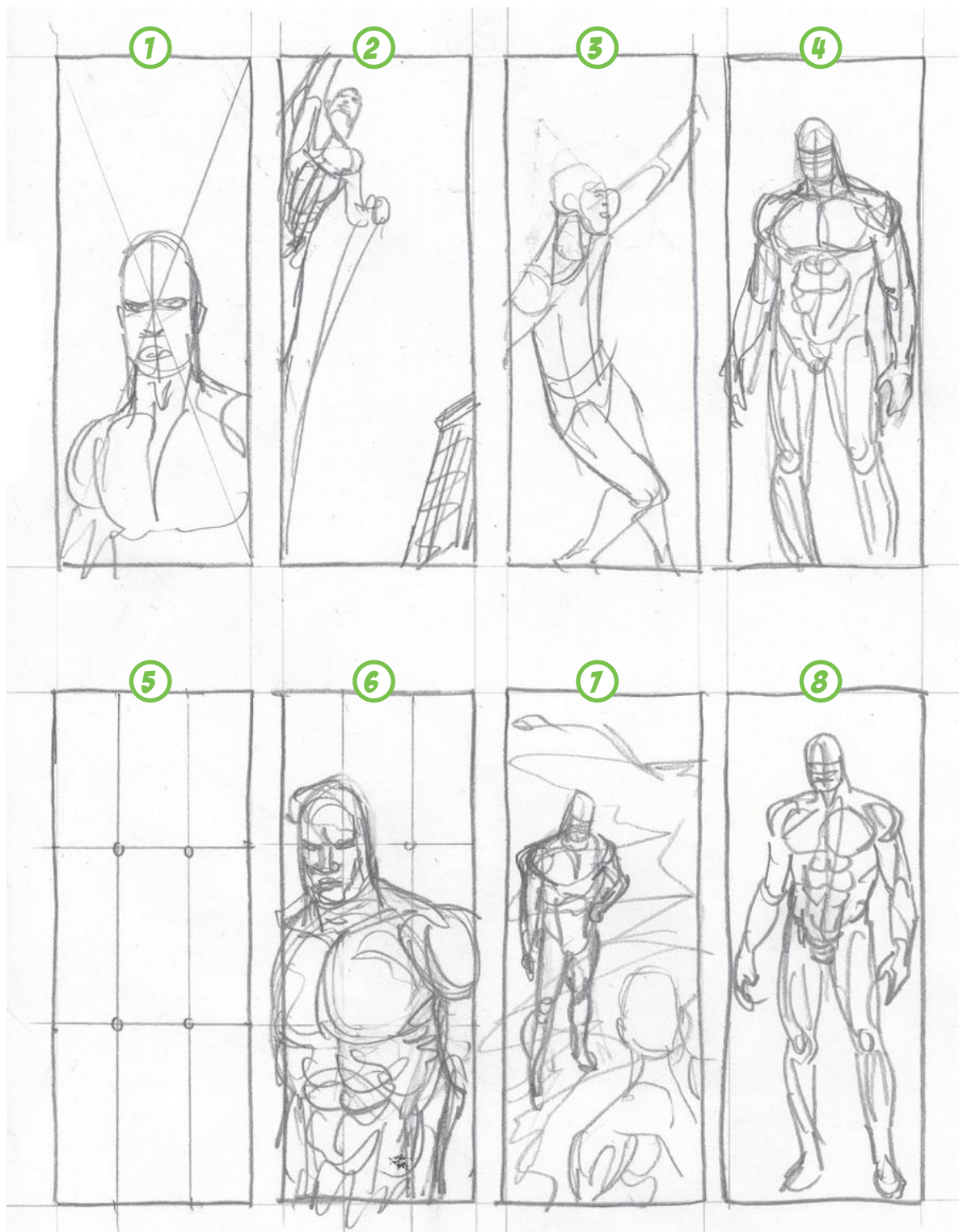
5 Do divide your panel into thirds both ways and do place your center of interest on one of the conjunctions of these lines. You can never go wrong with the Rule of Three!

6 A point of interest is: a head, a spaceship, the major figures, etc.

7 Give your figures air to breathe, i.e., negative space around them.

8 Draw the whole figure, their feet grounded on whatever ground there is, at least once a page.

Not pictured: leave room for balloons!



#5 STORYTELLING



THE BRUTE PLOT - What follows is a simple five-panel plot, which an artist may receive from a writer.

Panel One:

Medium-long shot. Brute standing on cracked concrete surface, a testing ground for a high tech, super-secret laboratory. On the ground beneath him is rubble, and strewn throughout the debris are the broken, twisted bodies of high-tech guards.

Panel Two:

Medium close-up. Sensing something behind him, Brute whips his head around, angered, the energy about his head crackling.

Panel Three:

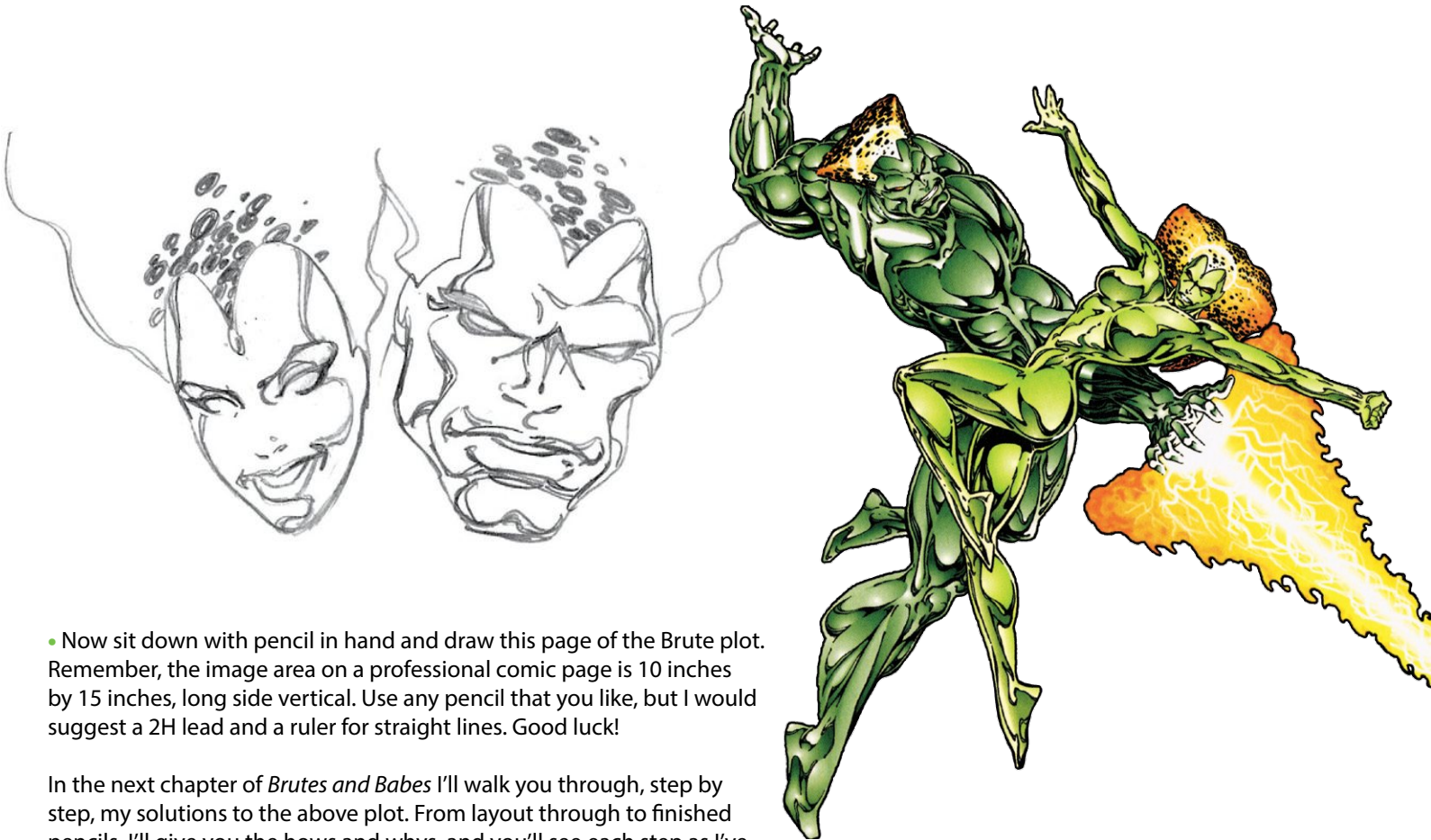
Full-figure shot from behind Brute as he faces off against Major Villain (NOTE: please design villain any way you like, but with very little metal in his costume; I'd like something with a texture that looks very different from Brute), who is floating a few feet off the ground, confident in his power, gloating.

Panel Four:

Close-up of Brute yelling angrily, fists clenched, energy power arcing dangerously from his fists to his head.

Panel Five:

Medium shot from behind Major Villain as he unleashes his awesome power full force into Brute, who is obviously hurt, but it is unclear just how badly.



- Now sit down with pencil in hand and draw this page of the Brute plot. Remember, the image area on a professional comic page is 10 inches by 15 inches, long side vertical. Use any pencil that you like, but I would suggest a 2H lead and a ruler for straight lines. Good luck!

In the next chapter of *Brutes and Babes* I'll walk you through, step by step, my solutions to the above plot. From layout through to finished pencils, I'll give you the hows and whys, and you'll see each step as I've completed it.



#6 THUMBNAILS

BRUTES AND BABES!

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS

BY BART SEARS

Well, here we are... the sixth chapter of *Brutes and Babes*. I just want to say thanks for reading. I hope that this stuff is making sense and helping someone learn.

Lots to look at and discuss today, so I won't waste any more space and...

...let's get to it!



#6 THUMBNAILS



THE
THUMBNAIL
HAS REAL
POWER!



Here again we have the Brute plot, with a few differences. When a plot (or script) comes in, the very first thing you do is read it (makes sense, right?). The second thing you do is read it again, but this time as you read it and thoughts and images continue to flood your brain, start marking up the plot. I like to highlight the characters in each panel, and any major actions that I want to make certain are clearly and/or dramatically displayed. I also write in any thoughts or notes I have, that I don't want to forget. Remember, if you are drawing a normal comic story (20-22 pages) you may not start drawing this page for a couple of weeks! Not shown here but something to keep in mind, I also mark/highlight/list any text I might need to find reference for, for instance, buildings, cars, weapons, etc. What follows is a simple five-panel plot, which an artist may receive from a writer.

Panel One:

Medium-long shot. Brute standing on cracked concrete surface, a testing ground for a high tech, super-secret laboratory. On the ground beneath him is rubble, and strewn throughout the debris are the broken, twisted bodies of high-tech guards.

Panel Two:

Medium close-up. Sensing something behind him, Brute whips his head around, angered, the energy about his head crackling.

Panel Three:

Full-figure shot from behind Brute as he faces off against Major Villain (NOTE: please design villain any way you like, but with very little metal in his costume; I'd like something with a texture that looks very different from Brute), who is floating a few feet off the ground, confident in his power, gloating.

Panel Four:

Close-up of Brute yelling angrily, fists clenched, energy power arcing dangerously from his fists to his head.

Panel Five:

Medium shot from behind Major Villain as he unleashes his awesome power full force into Brute, who is obviously hurt, but it is unclear just how badly.

- **THUMBNAILS** - When you first sit down to start a page, it's a good idea to work out your ideas quickly, on a small scale, not worrying about details or finish, just working on the design and storytelling dramatics. These small, quick sketches are called THUMBNAILS. Here are a series of four thumbnails I've done. All of them tell the same story, but all of them do it in a slightly different way. Study them for a moment.

The first step to laying out a page is deciding on the panel design. Is the first panel big or small, etc? What I try to do is decide which panel has the most dramatic impact, and assume that will be my largest panel. Then I design the rest of the page around it. This page has two panels that I felt were equally important, the third and the fifth panels, so I looked for a solution that emphasized both.



#6 THUMBNAILS

• In #1, I put most of the impact in panel 3, but this layout just didn't grab me. It's okay, but the flow is page flow is weak, and the Brute figure (in both pose and size) in panels 2 and 3 is too similar.

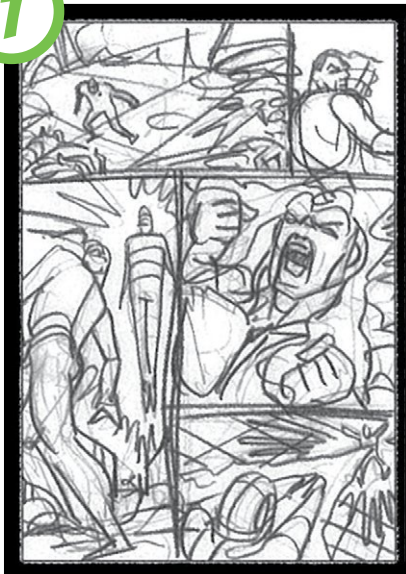
• In #2, I split the impact more to my liking, but I felt that Brute was too close to being the same size in panels 2, 3, and 4. Kinda liked panel 4 and 5.

• In #3, I was happy with almost everything except the final panel. Looking at it now, not crazy at all about panel 2 but really like panel 4.

• In #4 I put all the impact in the third panel, but the other four panels were all more interesting. This was by far the most interesting layout, with the best flow and most natural use of different character sizes.

With minor corrections, I decided to proceed with the fourth (#4) thumbnail.

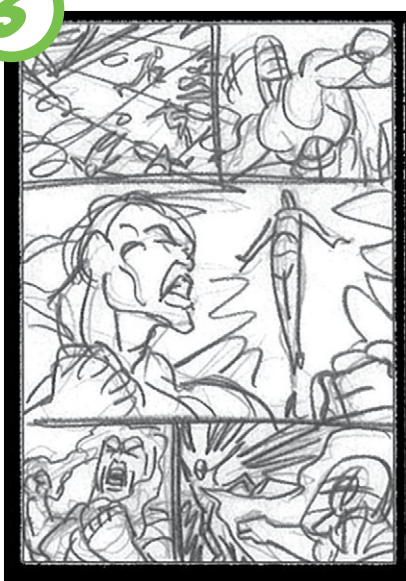
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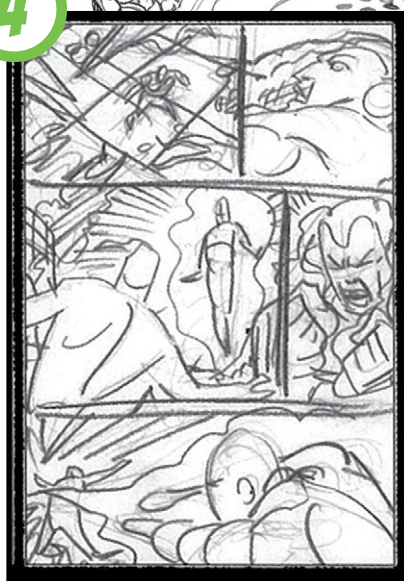
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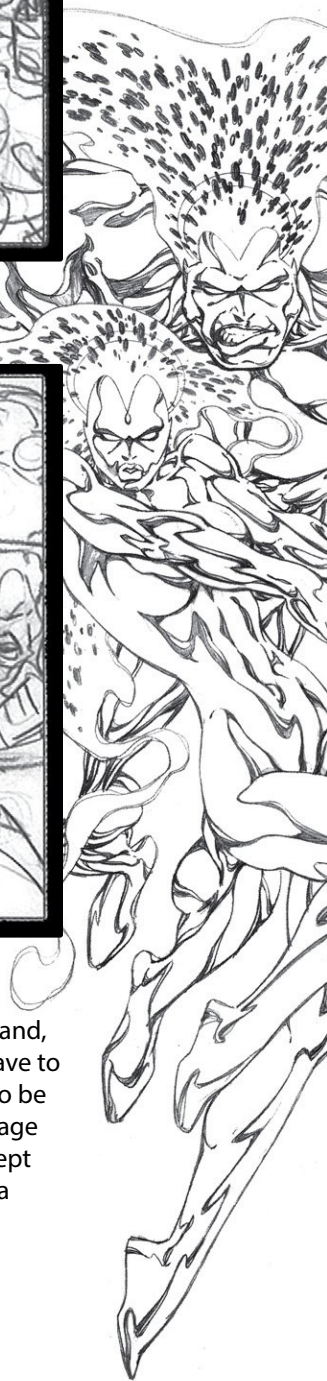
3



4



• NOTE: When laying out a page, you have to be very careful to tell the story clearly. People on the page can't jump around the room from panel to panel and, by the same token, they can't change sides of the page with impunity. You have to remember, whoever looks at your page has no idea what you are supposed to be drawing. If you're unsure about whether your storytelling is clear, hand the page to a friend or family member and ask them to tell you what's going on... except for a few details (such as names and motivations) they should come up with a fairly accurate summary of the plot.



#6 THUMBNAILS



ROUGH PENCILS - What you see here is a rough pencil drawing of the thumbnail I chose to flesh out (its actual size is 10 inches by 15 inches). All the bubble figures are roughed in and ready to be finished off. Note how things that overlap or extend beyond the panel have been drawn in to ensure proper proportion and detail. My next step will be to throw this baby on the lightbox, put a fresh bristol board on top of it, and do the finished pencils.

- Before you turn the page and look, there are a few snags in the storytelling here that I changed when I did the finishes – see if you can find them. They're minor, but they bugged me.



#6 THUMBNAILS



#6 THUMBNAILS



- On the facing page we have the finished pencils for the Brute plot page. Obviously there is a big difference between the rough pencils and the finished version. Just picking out the proper lines and textures to best illustrate a form or figure is an art all to itself; we'll get to that in future chapters. For now, let's look at the storytelling.



- The first change I felt was necessary was to flip Panel two. I did this to keep the "flow" between panels constant. "Flow" is the movement of characters from panel to panel, and it has to be believable and consistent. You have to be careful that the characters don't make any unseen moves between panels that distract from the "flow." For instance, looking at panels one and three, panel two didn't make sense with BRUTE looking over his left shoulder and then spinning to face MAJOR VILLAIN to his right. So I flipped panel two so that BRUTE could look over his right shoulder.





#6 THUMBNAILS

- The next change I made was in panel three; I moved BRUTE to the right to keep his left arm fully in the panel. There was just no reason for it to be cut off and it made him look kinda squeezed in.
- In the same panel, I also reduced the size of the MAJOR VILLAIN figure and raised it up. Clearing BRUTE's arm, reinforcing the sense that MAJOR VILLAIN is floating.
- Remember, when figures overlap, they have to look like one is in front of the other, not like one is short and standing on the other's arm... or, as in the rough pencils, like BRUTE is holding the guy up by his feet.
- The last change I made was in panel four. I flipped BRUTE in this panel to maintain the "flow" and to reinforce the left-right character placement of BRUTE and MAJOR VILLAIN. Unless the characters move, it is important to make sure they stay on the same side of the panel they started on. If you keep flipping their places in different panels for no reason, your storytelling will become very confusing and your reader will stop reading and start trying to figure out what is going on.



Anyway, I hope that you enjoyed our first look at a comic page; I know I have.

Now hit that drawing table and Keep Drawing!

#7 BODY LANGUAGE



BRUTES AND BABES!

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS
BY BART SEARS

Yes, I'm back again! It's time for another *Brutes and Babes*.

In this tutorial we'll be talking about body language, natural posing and gesture. These three subjects are different but so intricately intertwined that it is almost impossible to draw just one aspect alone in the course of drawing sequential art. And we could even add expression into the mix. Each is part and parcel of drawing people. Well, enough babble...

...let's get to it!



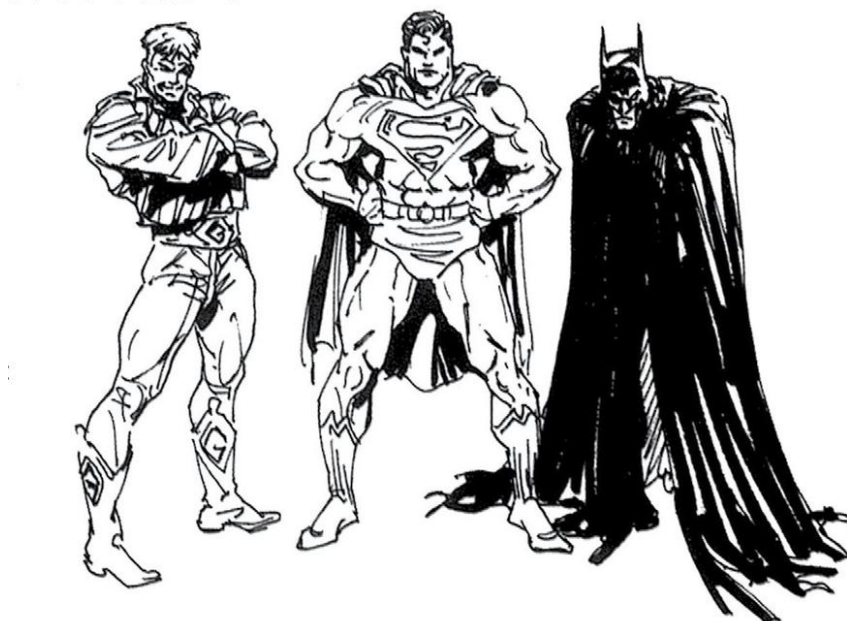
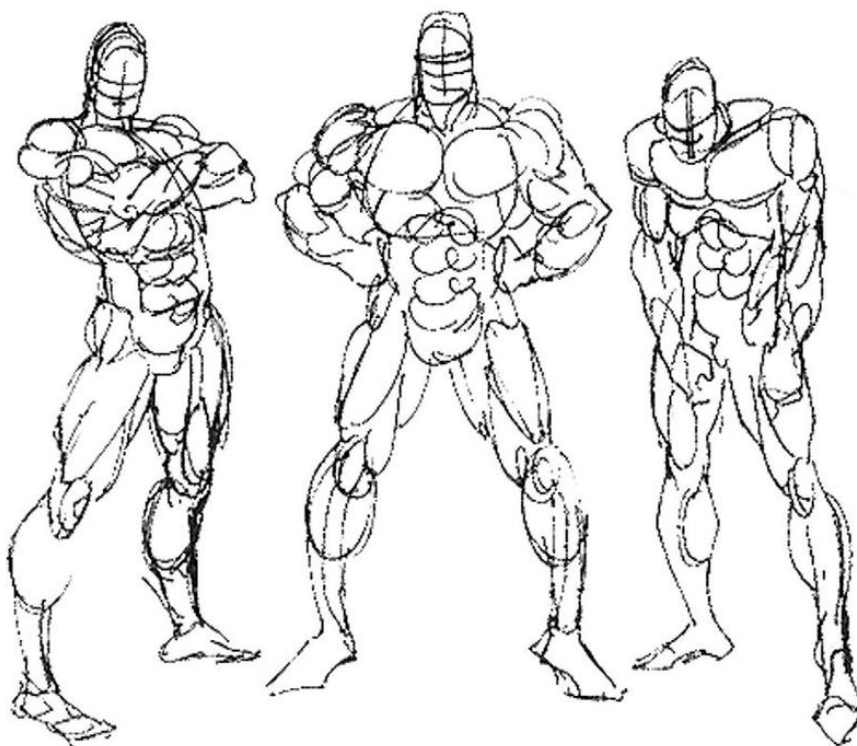


#7 BODY LANGUAGE

Each person, male or female, heroic or non-heroic, that you draw will have a consistent way of moving that is unique to that individual.

As an example, Superman stands, sits, walks and flies in a much different manner from Guy Gardner. Keep in mind a character's personality, even when they are doing mundane and ordinary things. Always remember, the more time and thought you put into each figure that you draw, the more believable and dramatically real he or she will appear to your readers.

- There are several things to keep in mind when drawing characters on your comic pages. You have to remember the personality of the character, what they are doing and why (to picture their mental state, which should show through in your drawing), and what is being done to them (is their arm broken, are they bleeding, dizzy, dirty, wet, etc.), showing the physical state the character is in.



#7 BODY LANGUAGE



- The body language of a character can be determined by the size and shape of a character. i.e. a large, bulky character would probably be ponderous and slow moving, wasting no motion. A lean, muscular character would probably be more graceful, faster moving, and less hindered by gravity than their larger friend.

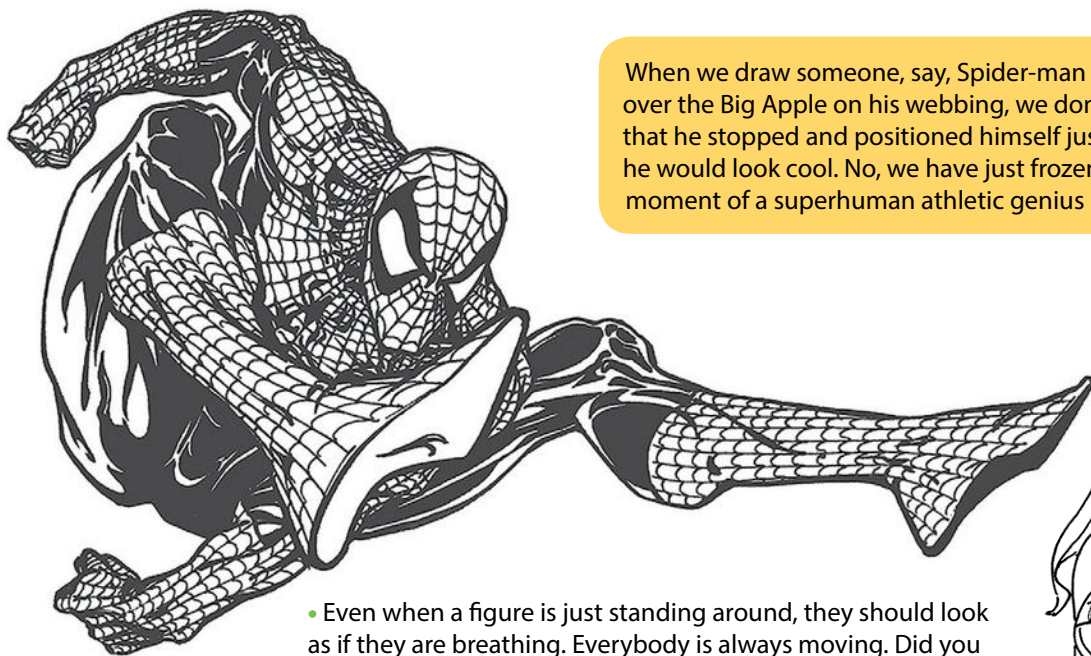


- This is not to say that all large characters are or even should be slow and clumsy. But I just want you to be aware of what you are drawing, and stay consistent.

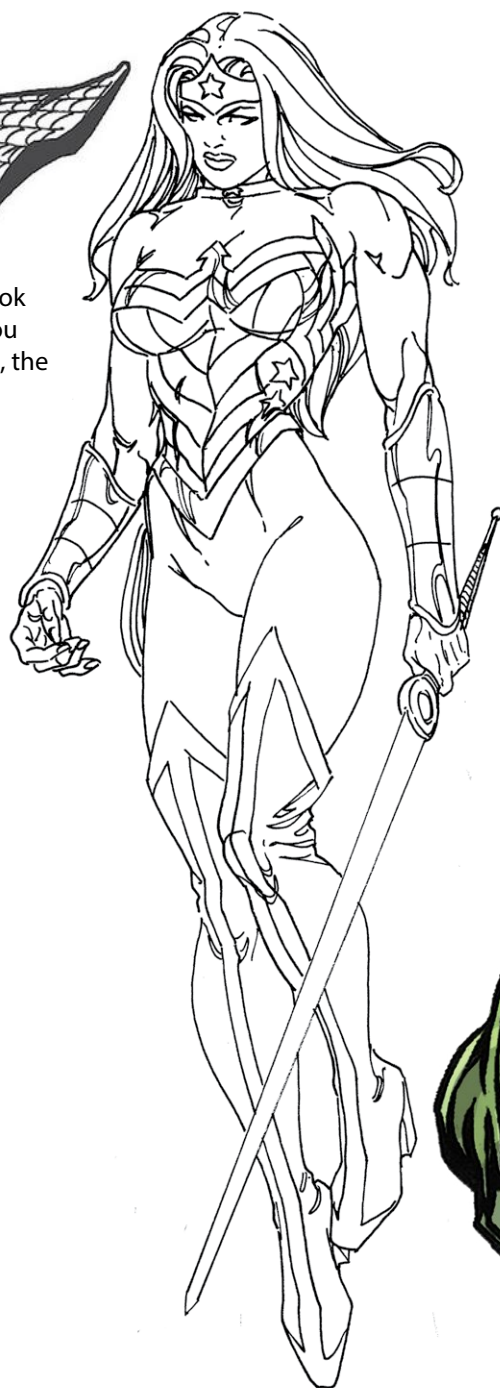
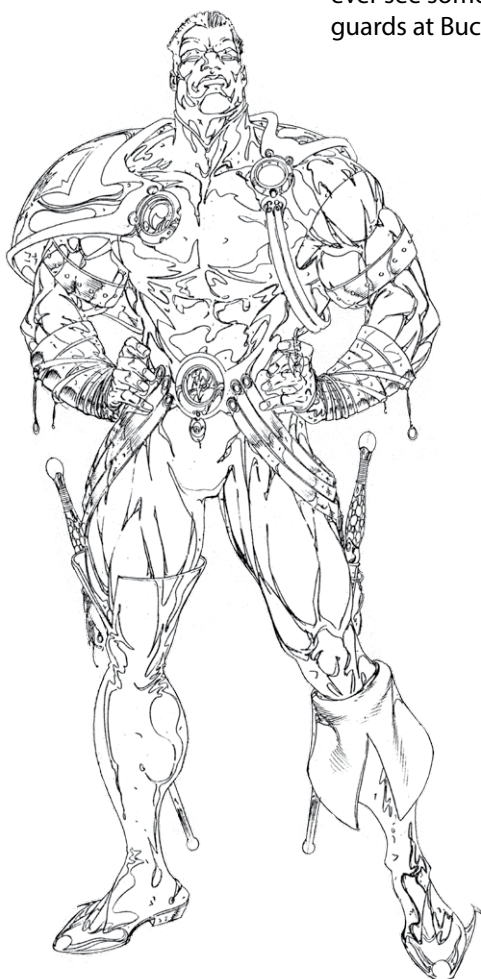


#7 BODY LANGUAGE

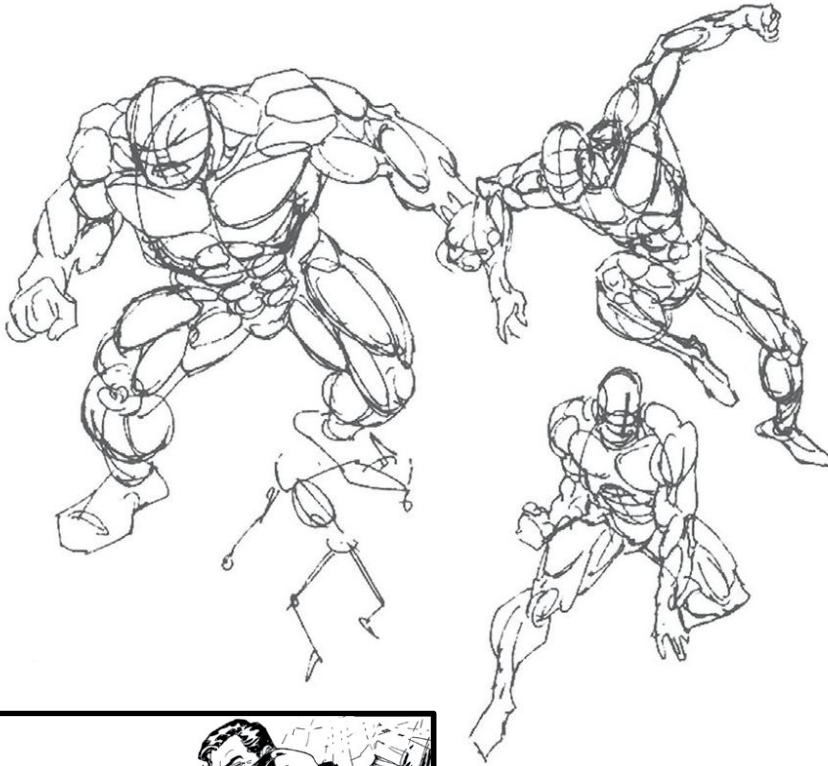
When we draw someone, say, Spider-man swinging over the Big Apple on his webbing, we don't assume that he stopped and positioned himself just right so that he would look cool. No, we have just frozen an exciting moment of a superhuman athletic genius in action.



- Even when a figure is just standing around, they should look as if they are breathing. Everybody is always moving. Did you ever see somebody stand perfectly still (excepting, perhaps, the guards at Buckingham Palace)?



#7 BODY LANGUAGE



- Figures must appear fluid. That is to say, all of their parts must work in unison. When someone throws a punch in comics, their whole body follows the action and movement of the fist, and has no choice but to react fluidly with it.



- Cool poses may look good, but to me they interrupt the “flow” of the story. Think about it... in the middle of a massive battle, Joe Hero stops and calmly stands, looking cool, pointing one heroic finger at Supervillain, saying coolly, “You’re dead Villain!” while death rays and hammer-like villain-things pound his body into a useless, bloody pulp. You can do the same thing but while Joe Hero is saying “You’re dead, Villain!” he can be slamming hammer-like villain-things into death rays, fighting his way to Supervillain. Maybe this isn’t the best example, but I hope you catch my drift.



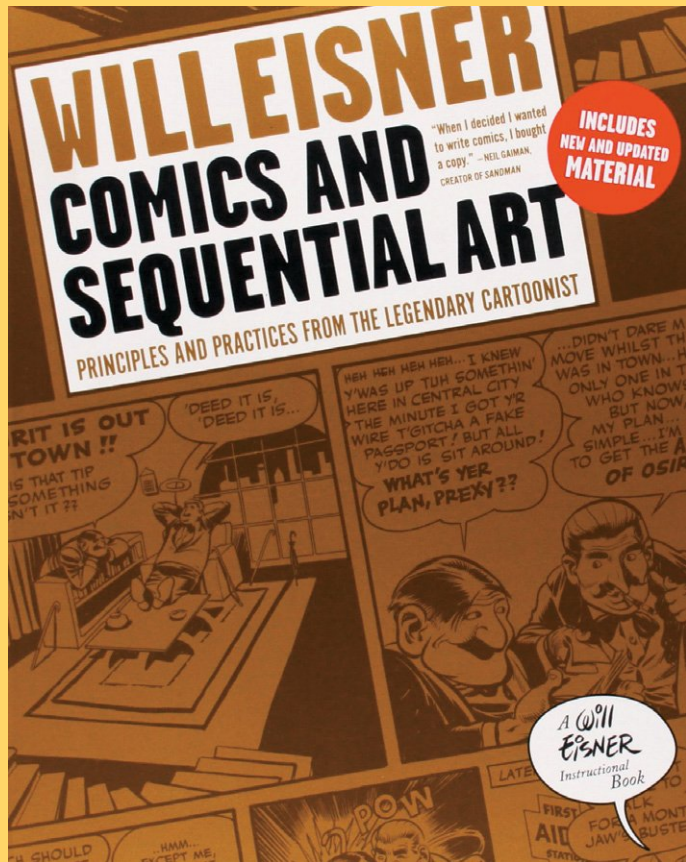
#7 BODY LANGUAGE

Some people talk with their hands, some always seem to threaten with their fists or intimidate with their heads thrust forward. Some turn their head when listening; some people always play with their hair, etc., etc., etc. All of these are gestures and there are hundreds more.



- Just as each individual has a different way of walking and moving, each has differing expressions and small body movements when they talk or smile or argue; or even when just sitting still. They might twiddle their thumbs, chew a cigar, twirl their glasses, play with their moustache, or whatever. The trick is to find something right for your character(s) and keep having them do it. They might only do it when they are nervous or scared or angry, but keep letting them do it. And remember, nobody else will do it the same way, nor should they.

#7 BODY LANGUAGE



When you look at Eisner's book, don't be disappointed because the X-Men aren't jumping around anywhere in the book (Mr. Eisner didn't draw a whole lot of over-muscled, skin-tight-suited heroes; he did draw great comics). If you want a comic, buy one. But, on the other hand, if you want to draw and you want to be good, you'll like this book. Read it, and when you are done, read it again. Read it whenever you're bored... and draw, trying to apply the concepts the book talks about, and read it again. I guarantee, if you try and you have talent, *Comics and Sequential Art* will start to make a lot of sense and become a valuable handbook that you will treasure.

I've been pushing this book on artists for years and years, it is truly a masterwork on understanding sequential art. I highly, highly, highly recommend it for ANYONE who wants to write, draw, color, letter, and especially edit comics. CHECK IT OUT!

If there are any of you out there with your hearts set on becoming artists, comic book or otherwise, then Will Eisner's *Comics and Sequential Art* is a must. Eisner has long been considered a master of comic art and his book is easily the most informative work on the art form to date.

- **Gesture** encompasses every natural action you draw, small and large, and always consists and works with body language and natural posing. These darn things don't work alone!





#8 COVERS

BRUTES AND BABES!

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS

BY BART SEARS

IF YOU PUT
ME ON EVERY
COVER, THEY'D ALL
BE POWERFUL!

Welcome to the eighth chapter of *Brutes and Babes*; we're going to talk about drawing powerful comic book covers. We'll take a look at some and discuss their good and bad points. So...

... let's get to it!



#8 COVERS



• The cover on these books will probably not completely influence whether readers buy or don't buy a particular comic. However, the purpose of the cover is to attract attention to the comic, to make it jump out from all the other comics on the rack, to cause someone glancing over the rack to reach forward and pick up that comic. Hopefully, the cover will interest this new buyer enough to open the comic and look through the great stuff inside and, this is by far the best part, shell out their money, take the thing home, and love it so much that this new customer becomes a regular reader.

NOW
THAT'S A LOT
OF POWERFUL
COVERS...

Why Covers? A comic book cover is the single most important drawing in any comic book.

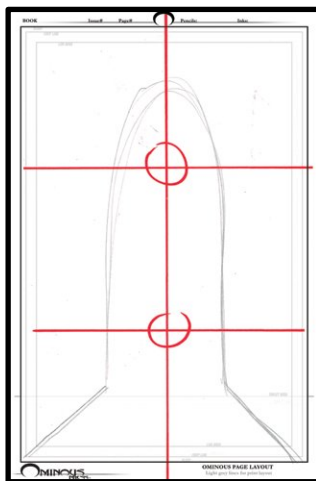
Now, I know that most people buy a particular comic because they:

- A) Like that comic or
- B) Feel that it will be popular and therefore a good investment.

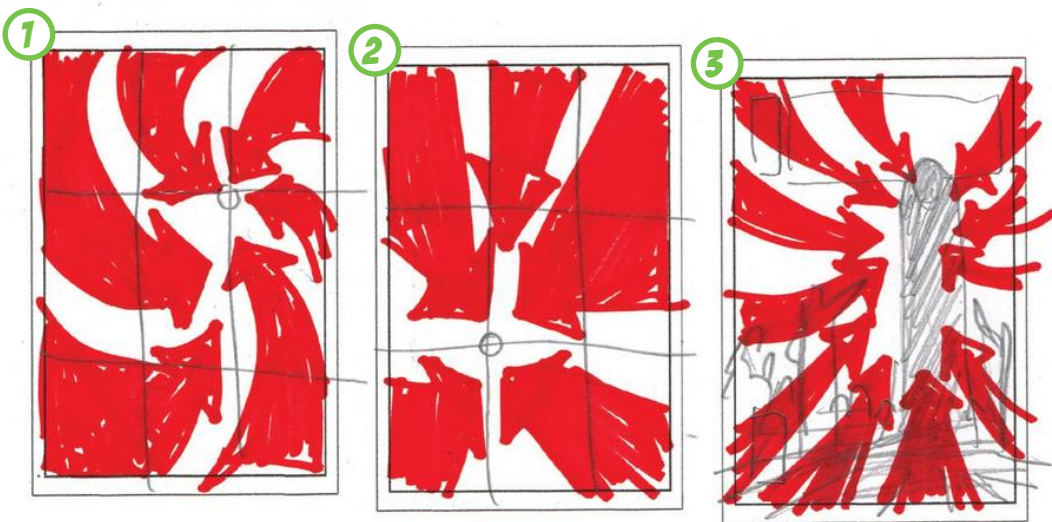


#8 COVERS

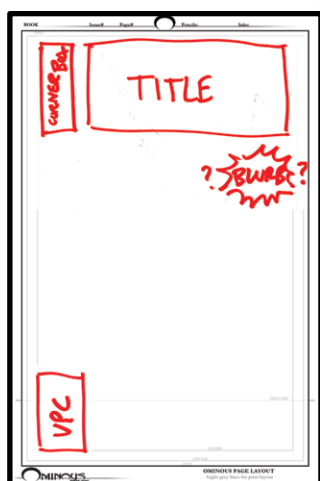
Covers have to be designed simply, to get their point across quickly and clearly... and with as much punch and excitement as possible. Now, by saying "designed simply," I don't mean that the covers should always have just a single figure standing in front of a white background, for covers must have some variety.



- What I am saying is that the design and flow of the cover, whether containing one figure or 150 figures, must be clear and easily readable, the dynamics of motion and the use of blacks forcing the reader's eye to the center of interest again and again. The center of interest is generally not the center of the page – unless you are creating an "iconic image" cover; see the iconic cover design and *Eternal Warrior* cover pictured here. This is probably the only time you can ever correctly place an image in the exact or near center of a page.



These three simple designs show center of interest and the flow of the art/design toward that center of interest. #1: design swirls towards center of interest. #2: design flows straight into/at center of interest. #3: an example of how flow works with a simple layout.



- We also have to keep in mind dead areas, areas where the title, price information and cover blurb(s) might be. Some editors might feel that the title is inviolable, or shouldn't be touched by the artwork, but I have always felt that if it's more visually stunning to incorporate the title into the artwork, then by all means, do it!

- Sometimes you start with a cover idea that you or your editor are taken with, but almost no matter what you do, it's not a good cover... you're stuck with it.

- A cover can't be a splash page, or just an exciting drawing, it has to be an illustration. It has to tell the whole story in just one panel. It doesn't have the benefit of preceding artwork to set things up or following artwork to finish things off.

- It must be whole and complete on its own.

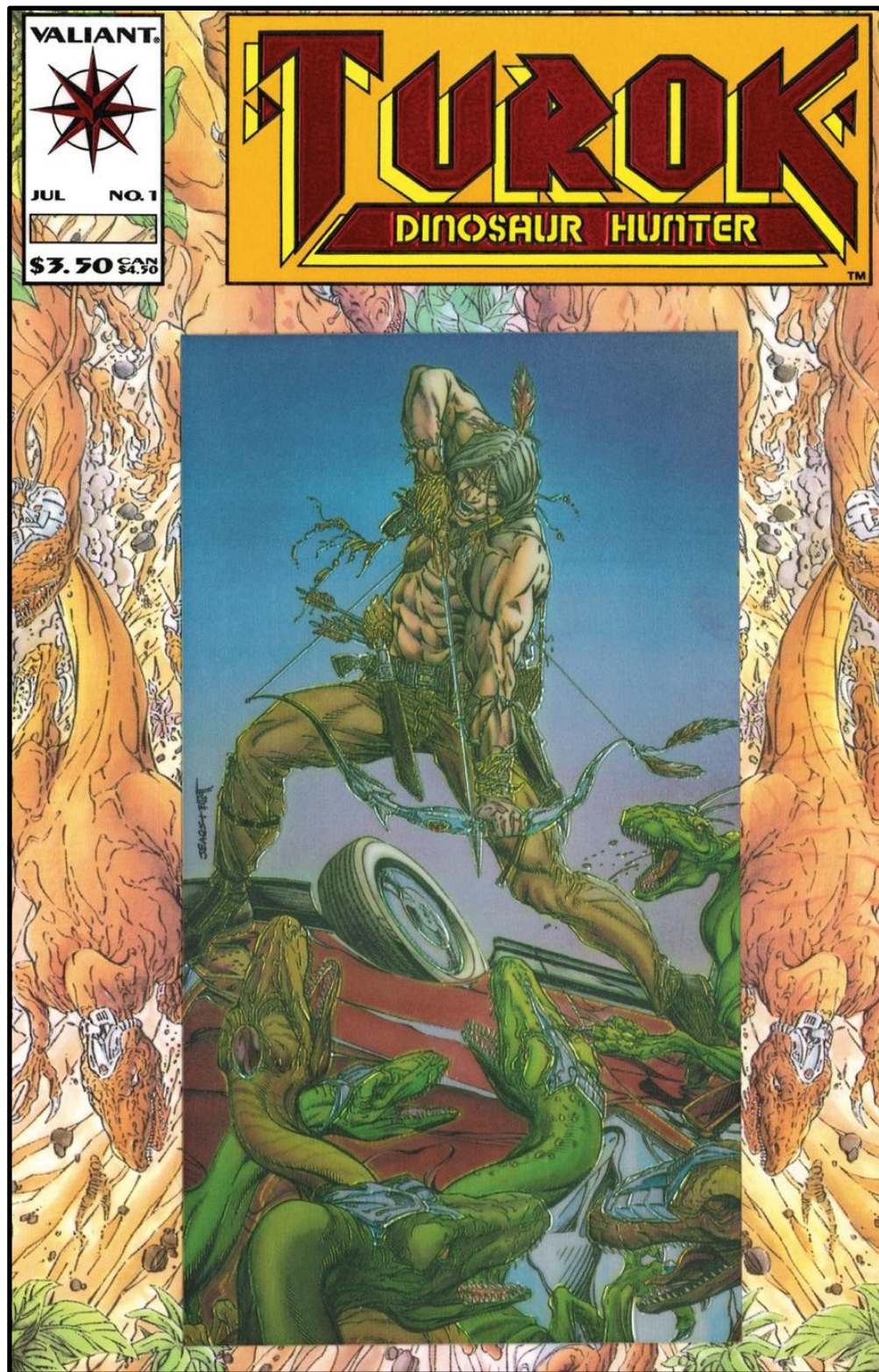
#8 COVERS



- **Justice League Europe #1:** The basic Justice League cover, done and overdone, but each time it makes for a strong cover. Easily identifiable characters with a simple design to move your eye around a nice posed snapshot-looking picture. It will stand out from the rack.



#8 COVERS



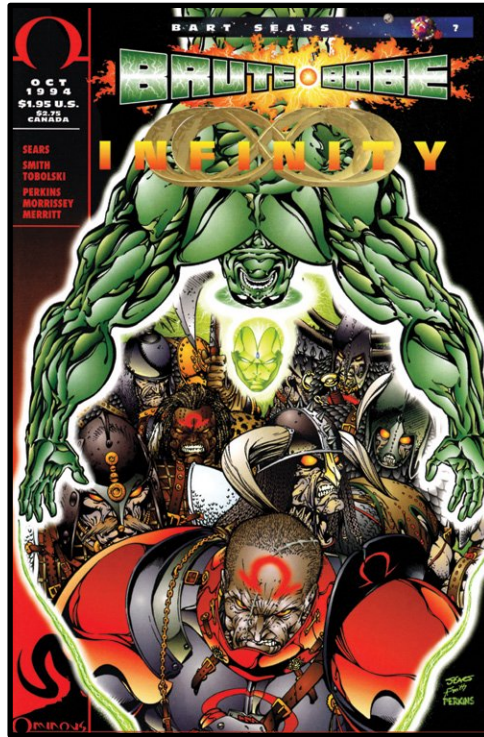
- Originally the image in the center of the cover was supposed to be the whole cover and all Chromium, but the ability to do that wasn't ready in time and the printer had to do the Chromium appliqué. The original image has been cropped quite a bit here – there was a street light and more. The dinosaur background was pulled from a promo image I did for *X-O Manowar*. This final cover works okay, basic iconic design, elements pull your eye up to Turok's head and shoulders. The background dinosaurs become noise, don't really add to or detract all that much from the central image.

#8 COVERS



- Four *Brute and Babe* covers from the classic run of Ominous Press. *INFINITY*. Strong image, Brute and his outstretched arms frame the main image of the Seven Molochs of the Dread Lord.

- *IT BEGINS*. The weapons lead the eye into Brute, his energy trail brings your eye in and around to Babe, whose body arc and arm positions send the eye back around to Brute. Rate it moderately successful.



- *MAEL'S RAGE*. Basic black and white design keeps pulling the eye into his eyes/nose, color work with the heavy white at top and bottom push the eye towards the more colourful center of the image. We should have made the contrast in his eyes more intense. Quite successful as a cover, I think.

- *DEATH OF PHEROS*. No trade dress here. Everything in the image pulls your eyes up and/or in to Dramaurg's leering face: from Pheros' thighs and arm position, to the angle and twist of Brute's and Babe's bodies, to the energy.



#8 COVERS

- **Rogue Trooper #14:** I feel this is one of the most striking covers I've ever done. Not the best inked, and it's cropped just enough so that you want to see what's just outside the border, but it is easily one of the most eye-catching covers that I've ever done.



- **Strontium Dog:** There's a lot going on in this cover. Notice the flow of the blacks and the figures... you can't help but look at Strontium Dog. The mass of detail and line work surrounding the Dog helps separate him from the background. I'd say a very successful cover.



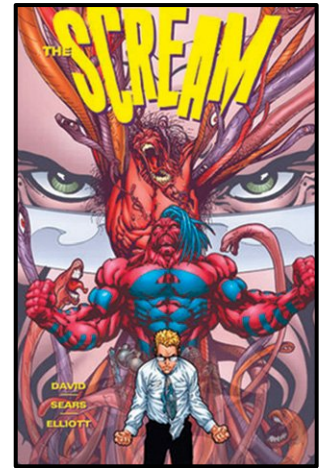
- **Judge Dredd #13:** The top half of the cover looks great! But, my use of blacks doesn't really draw the eye up to Dredd's face, and the light color of the pistol, the perp's flesh and the bright yellow kneepads pull your eye down out of the picture. This is an okay image, and might pop pretty well on the stands, but execution-wise not the most successful cover.



#8 COVERS



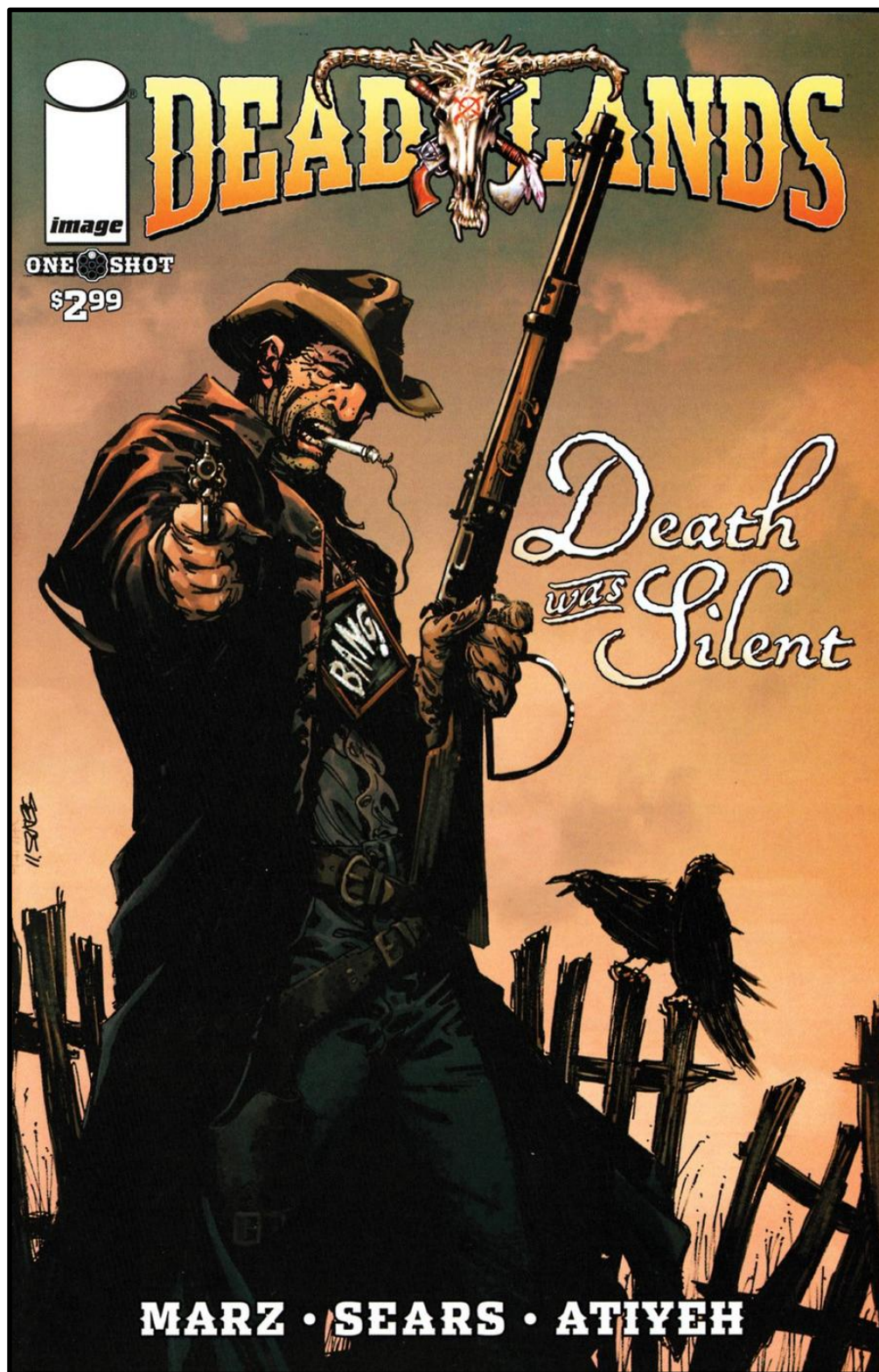
• Study the four single issue *Scream* covers. Issue #1 works great, it's right in your face, a bit of a twist on the standard iconic design. Strong imagery and solid cover; not a fan of yellow but it does make the cover pop! Issue #2 is the most complex cover of the four covers, the elements create a fairly circular design that keeps your eye moving around the image; especially the three main heads/characters! Issue #3 sports a fairly straightforward iconic design. In my mind the super-heroic counterpart to the monster version of cover #1. Issue #4 is another twist on the iconic standard – the design is strong and simple, not crazy about the background color choice – the least successful of these four.



• The *Scream* TPB cover features another twist on the iconic design structure... everything flows down to the human character, then around and back up. Works pretty well, but not crazy about the color treatment on the face in the background. I would have gone with something more monochromatic, to really separate it from the foreground and midground figures. Not sure why they changed the logo – it's not ripped here.



#8 COVERS



- **Deadlands: Death Was Silent:** I think this cover is extremely successful. It has a very simple, strong design, strong black and white work and great color. We have a little logo overlap and a blurb! It all works. Very striking.

#8 COVERS



• **The Spectre #22:** This *Spectre* cover is a good example of an imaginary cover --- this scene never appears within the comic, but it captures the essence of the story in one illustration fairly well. A strong central image, the design a bit too straight up and down on the page, but all in all a fairly successful cover.



• **Justice League Europe #28:** A relatively simple cover. One strong key figure, three less important points of interest, then a pattern background. By pattern, I generally mean anything drawn repeatedly, at the same size and shape and with about the same line weight, used to create a certain effect within a given area. Here, the Starro starfish are used as an illustrative backdrop for the key figure, Martian Manhunter, to separate him from the background and to show that the JLE is in a lot of trouble. A pretty successful cover.



• **Justice League Europe #17:** Here we have a cover with many elements, yet the basic design is simple and easy to see. The flight paths of all the missiles converge on Dr. Diehard. The sweep of all the figures surrounding Diehard are either moving towards the missiles and from there to Diehard, or directly to Diehard. In its present form I would have put the blurb, "Party Time at Ground Zero" along the bottom of the page, near the ground, which was drawn as the horizontal line (a sort of ground zero), or I would redraw the ground and Diehard's legs in more perspective.



• **Justice League Europe #19:** Here we have a cover with a lot of characters. But luckily, it is more of a "stand-off" type of cover, no real action. But, sadly, my design of the cover was weak. The upthrust created by the cliff and Captain Atom and the placement and flow of the villains beneath Cap are fine, but the placement of the other heroes (not counting Crimson Fox, who is fine) appears disjointed and weak. They actually hurt the overall design of the cover. All of this makes for a cover that I'm not terribly proud of.



• **Hero Alliance #1:** This was a half-wraparound cover. A fun cover. Notice how the standing figures are spaced so as to be easily separated from each other; the more important characters more pronounced. The prone figures and the tombstones are designed to sweep forward from the back of the cover and thrust up to the two main figures of the piece. The heavily-blackened villain towers above them all, balancing the drawing, completing the upsweep of standing hero figures towards Victor. This standing villain creates a downsweep towards the right, which merges with the aforementioned upsweep toward Victor. (That was a mouthful, huh?)

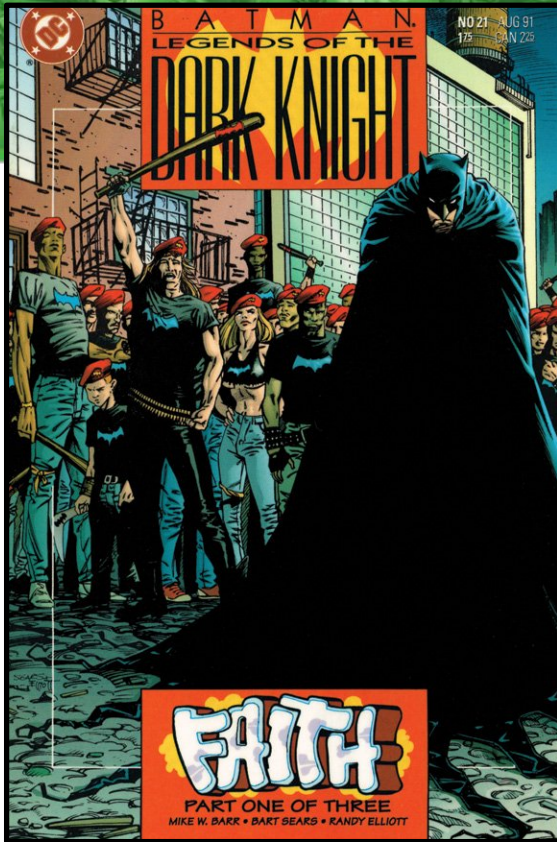


#8 COVERS

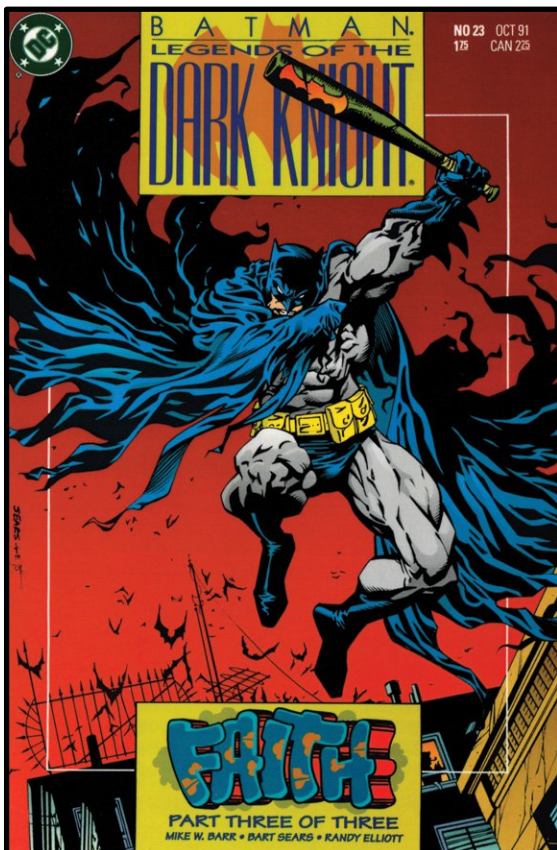


- **Spider Woman #1:** Editorial cropped this cover quite a bit. In the original the crazy spider arms were there and Jessica Drew's hand wasn't close to being cropped. Still, it works pretty well, the circular design keeps your eye moving and coming back to Spider Woman... why Spider Woman is a girl and Spider Girl is a woman, I'll never know.

#8 COVERS



- **Legends of the Dark Knight #22:** Here is a cover with many figures. It's a fairly attractive design with, both figuratively and literally, the spotlight(s) on the central element. The gang leader with the pistol is also easily seen and both key elements are "framed" by the third important element, the gang. Note the general flow is towards their leader and Batman.



- **Legends of the Dark Knight #23:** A simple, single figure, iconic design style cover; strong design, slightly off-center, striking image and use of blacks, should leap off the shelves as easily as Batman leaps off the rooftop.



#8 COVERS



• **Blade #1:** Blade! What a fun book... just loved writing and drawing Blade. Decent design, everything pulls your eye up to Blade, then back down to the burning vampire, then back around and up to Blade... a striking twist on the standard iconic design. Note the tentacles from the pit, how they sweep up and around and toward Blade, keeping the flow.

That about wraps it up. Hope I shed some light on creating great comic book covers!

#9 BLOCK AND CUBE METHOD



BRUTES AND BABES!

**DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS
BY BART SEARS**

Hi, and welcome back to *Brutes and Babes!*

In this shiny chapter, we will talk about basic figure construction, focusing on the time-tested Block and Cube method. Should be mountains of fun!

It seems most people have trouble locating good drawing books, and that some of the things that I take for granted or accept as a given, aren't necessarily so. For example, in the past I have talked about several methods of constructing figures, the most popular and successful of which is the Block and Cube method. Now that I realize that many of you don't understand or haven't been exposed to this simple constructive tool, I would like to remedy this situation.

So, with that having been said...

...let's get to it!

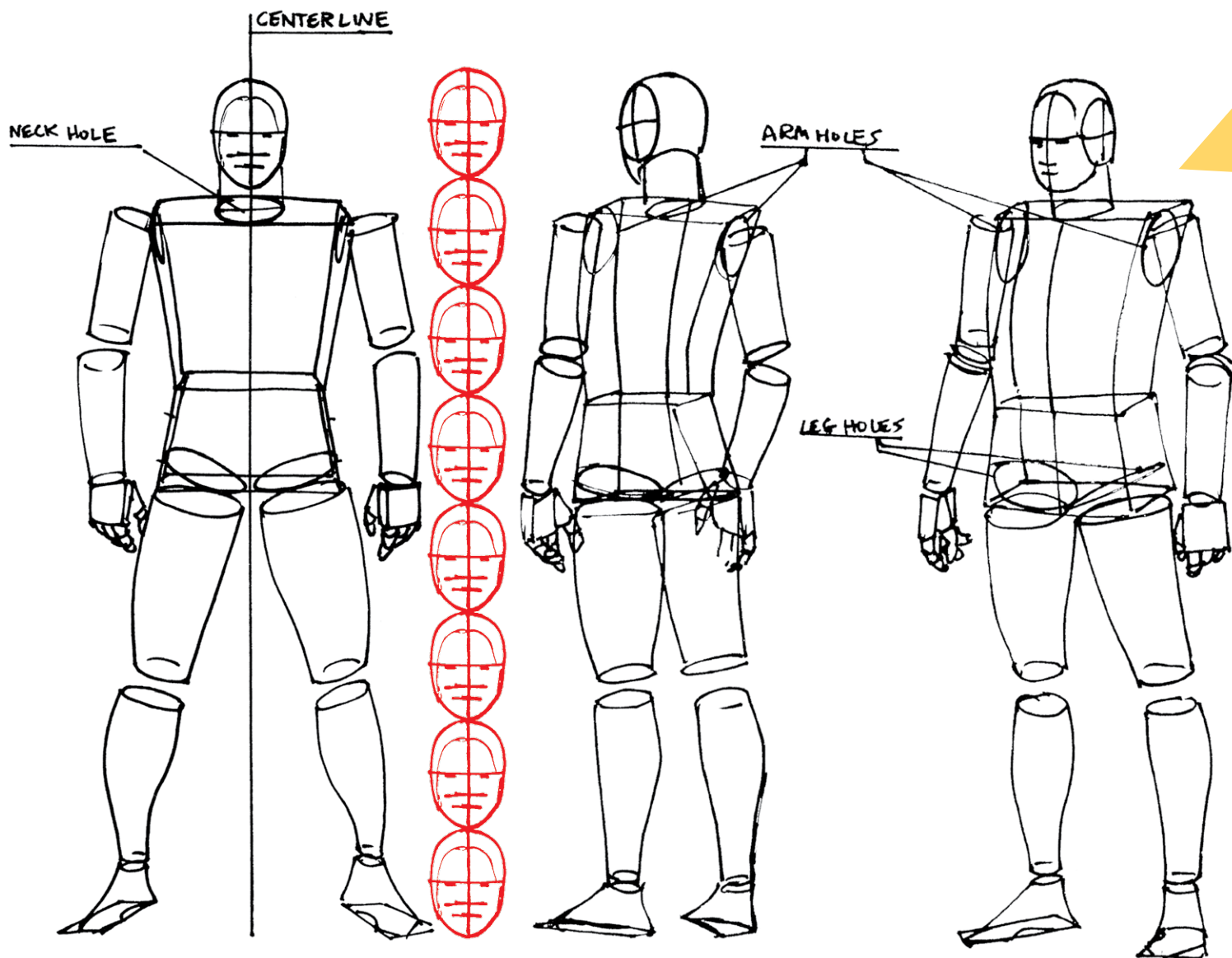


#9 BLOCK AND CUBE METHOD

Here I have drawn a simple eight-head-tall figure. Notice the simple block shapes for the chest and hips, the simple cylinders that make up the arms and legs. It looks easy, but let me warn you, it is not! **Proportion, proportion, proportion!**

- I can't emphasize enough the importance of... you guessed it, proportion. Nor am I going to waste any space detailing all the proportion head measures for all the different key elements of anatomy.

A SIMPLE,
SOLID UNDERSTRUCTURE
MAKES ME HAPPY.



- What I *will* do is assign you the task of measuring and defining all the appropriate head measures off of this figure and those that follow. Remember to measure from joint to joint and for thickness, side to side and front to back.

- Remember, think about what you are drawing, build that clear mental picture that you can turn and twist in your head.

#9 BLOCK AND CUBE METHOD

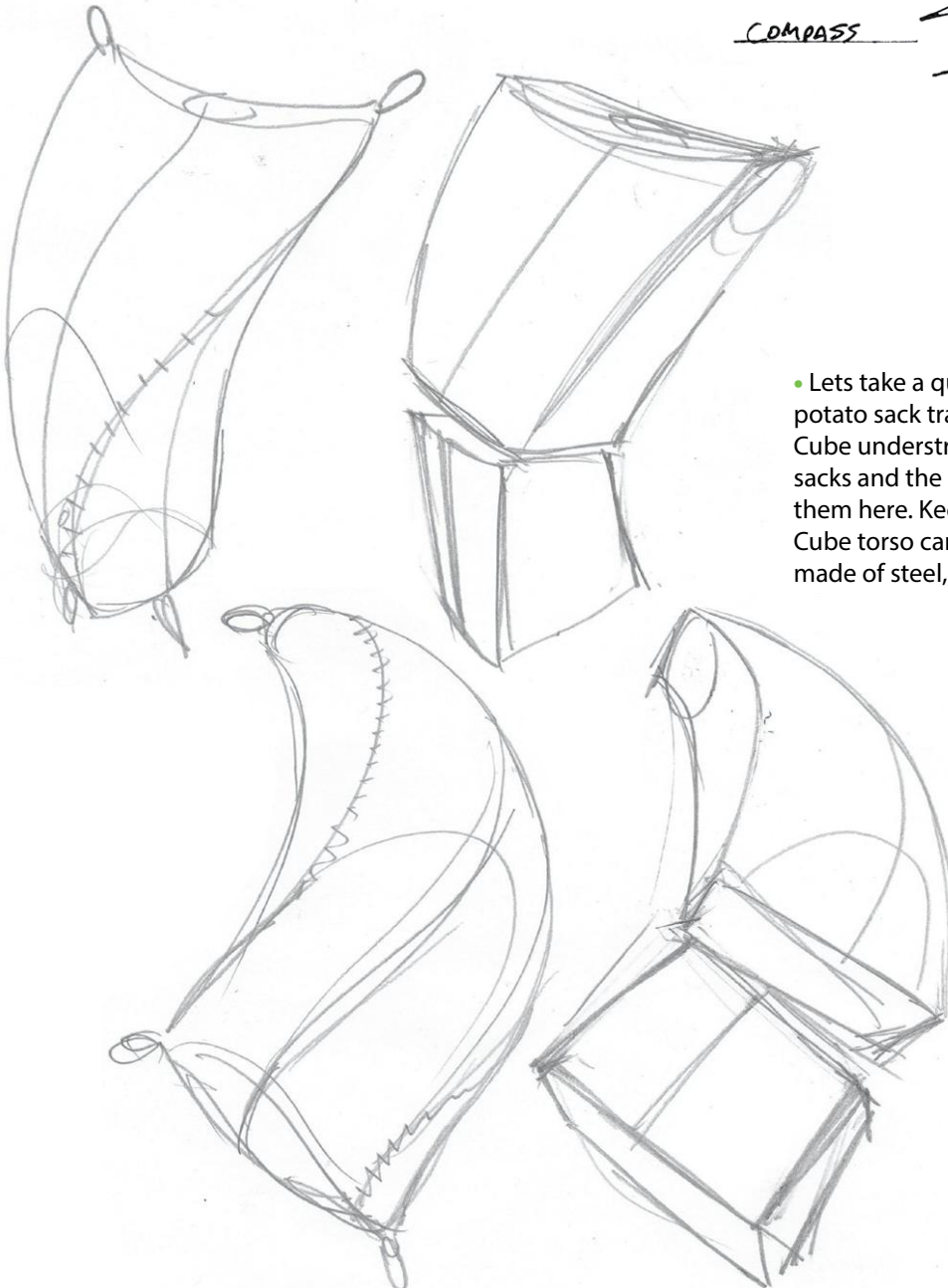
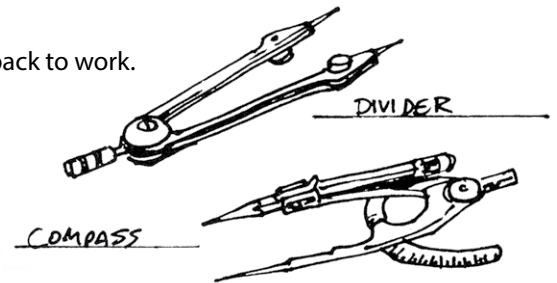


As you can see, I have drawn two more Block and Cube figures from two new angles. Please put your measuring cap on and start analyzing their proportions. Have fun and learn. You may have noticed that I didn't draw a side view Block and Cube figure. That, boys and girls, is because I would like YOU to draw one, using the knowledge of proportion you have learned. I have shown you the Block and Cube shapes; now it is time to grapple with them yourselves.

Good luck!

TOOLS - At this time, I'd like to take a little break to recommend a helpful tool for measuring proportions and distance. A tool that is useful not just on figures, but is helpful in many ways. It's called a Divider, and a normal school compass can be used much in the same way. All that you have to do is set the two points at whatever distance is necessary, say head size, and start measuring away. This tool is very useful in maintaining good proportion, plus it's simple and quick to use.

Okay, commercial's over... back to work.



- Lets take a quick look at how the potato sack translates into a Block and Cube understructure. Study the two sacks and the structures drawn over them here. Keep in mind the Block and Cube torso can bend and twist, it's not made of steel, it's made of rubber.



#9 BLOCK AND CUBE METHOD

1



I talk a lot about having a clear mental picture of a figure, and about form, and about form and space and mass and density. Once you have a clear grasp on proportion, I would highly recommend getting your hands on some clay and sculpting figures. Set up your proportions and start laying in those bubble masses. Twist it, turn it, study it. I think that seeing a form that you would draw actually taking up physical space, and having all of those other things I constantly harp on, can be an invaluable learning too. Have fun!

- Here are some examples of how this Block and Cube construction method applies to finished comic art. Check them out, then get out your tracing paper and construct block and cube figures over your favorite artist's work (I would suggest such artists as Brian Bolland, Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez and Steve Rude).

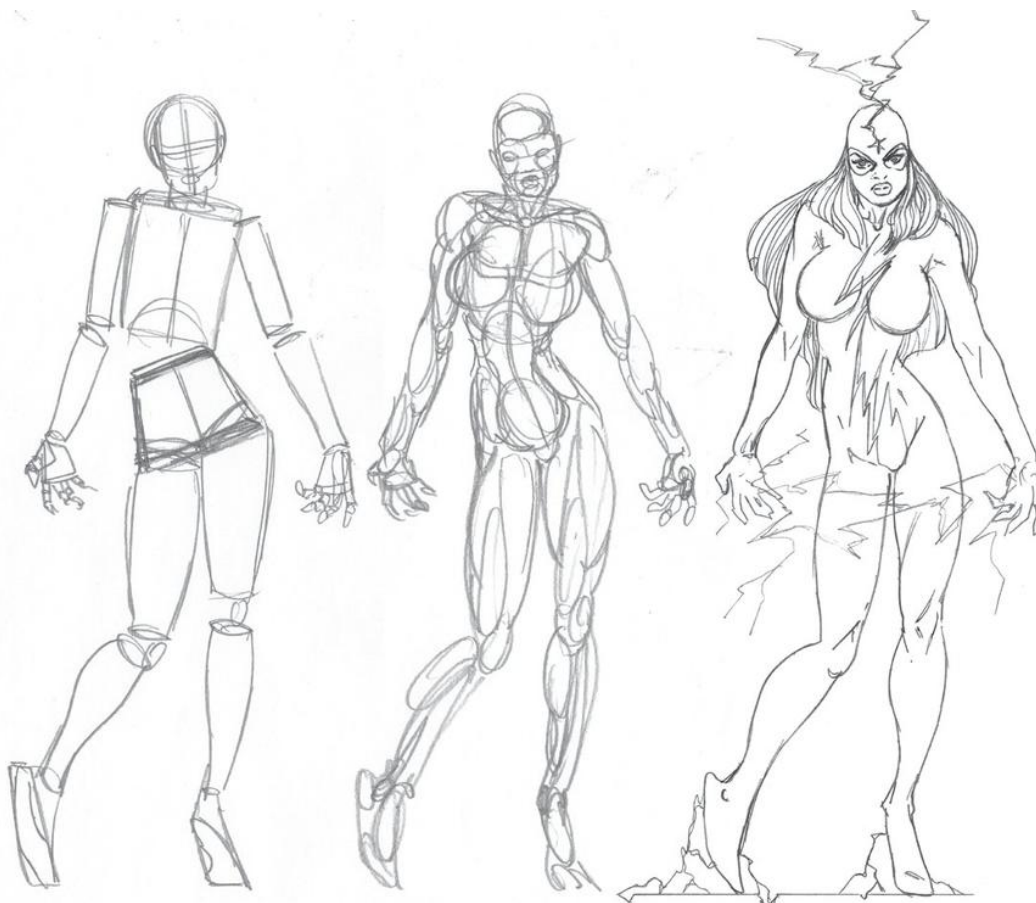
2



3



#9 BLOCK AND CUBE METHOD



- Let's look at figure construction from Block and Cube through the bubble muscle figure to the final penciled drawing. We have two figures pictured here, a heroic female and male. The Block and Cube, while being constructed of relatively simple, solid shapes, isn't inflexible, and the figures you construct with it need to be fluid and full of motion, both broad and subtle.

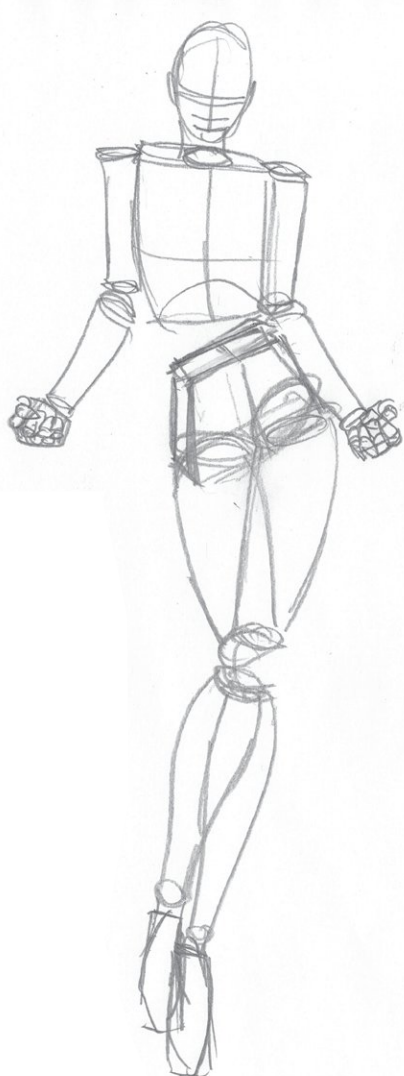
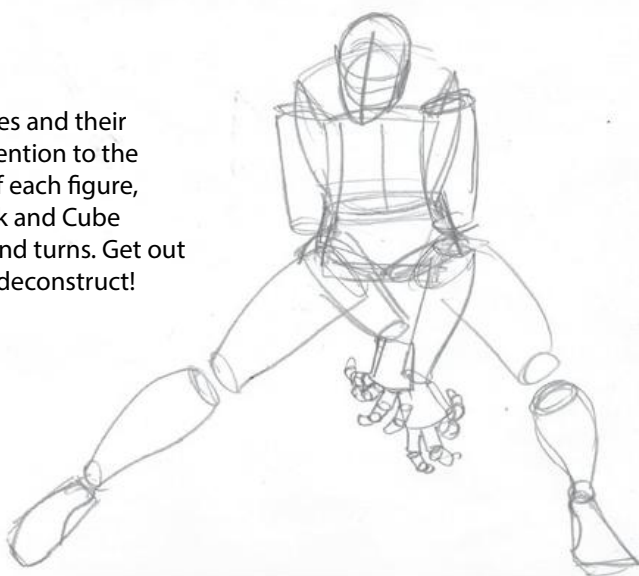


- Things to note: how the Block and Cube torso structure translates into the bubble muscle figure, and how simple, clean finished linework sculpts the final figure, from the rough-hewn musculature of the male hero, to the athletic power of the female heroine.



#9 BLOCK AND CUBE METHOD

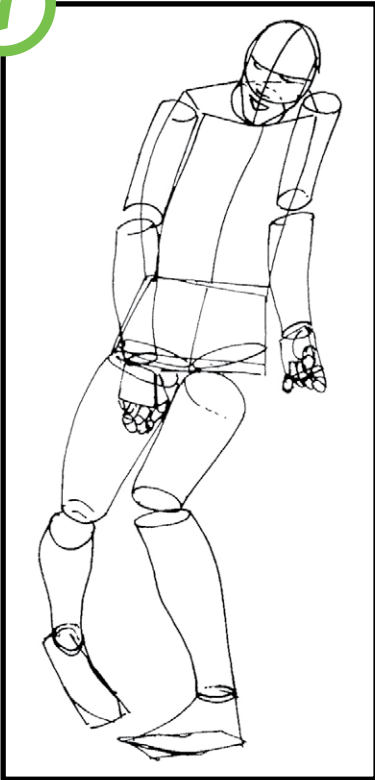
- Study these four figures and their understructure. Pay attention to the different proportions of each figure, as well as how the Block and Cube understructure twists and turns. Get out that tracing paper and deconstruct!



#9 BLOCK AND CUBE METHOD

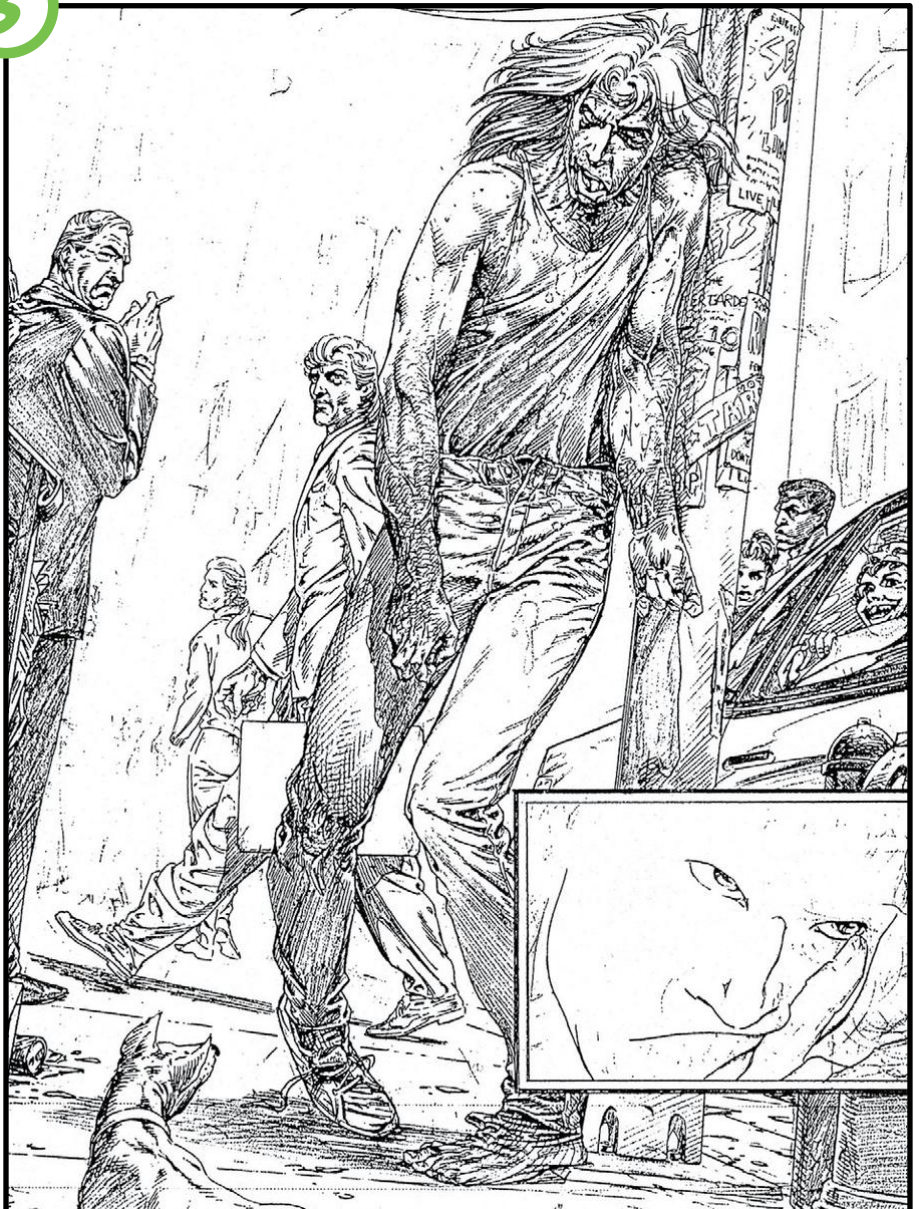


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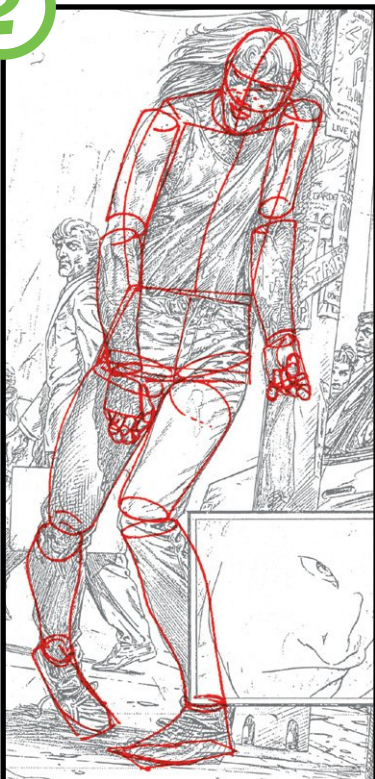


Thanks for reading. Keep up the good work. Drawing comics, like many specialized careers, takes a lot of hard work and dedication, so keep plugging away, KEEP DRAWING, but most of all... enjoy it! Thanks!

3



2





#10 PERSPECTIVE

BRUTES AND BABES!

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS

BY BART SEARS

Greetings and Salutations! I've been sitting here for half an hour trying to come up with an interesting way to welcome you to this new chapter of *Brutes and Babes*. Sadly, this is what you get... please bear with me, I've given up sleep, it's late as it is, and I've downed about three pots of "good to the last drop" coffee in about as many hours. But, surprisingly (or maybe not, considering the amount of caffeine I've consumed), I'm bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, excited about the topic of today's article, perspective...

...let's get to it!

GO! LEARN
PERSPECTIVE...
NOW!



#10 PERSPECTIVE



Much of what I know of perspective was gleaned from many sources at many different times of my life. Recently, I discovered a book that I have found to be the best single source of perspective drawing. Anything you want to know is in it, explained in relatively simple terms, clearly illustrated – it's a veritable treasure chest of perspective knowledge. I can't recommend this book highly enough for the novice and professional alike. If you can find it... pick it up! The book is:



On the Spot Guides
Perspective Drawing
 By **Mark Way**
 Published by Outline Press
 115J Cleveland Street,
 London W1P 8PN
 United Kingdom

Available online.

- According to my Webster's Dictionary (circa 1967), "perspective" is: 1. The art of depicting objects on a plane so as to show three dimensions and indicate distance away from the observer; 2. Proportion [Ha!], interrelation, scale; 3. Appearance in terms of distance.

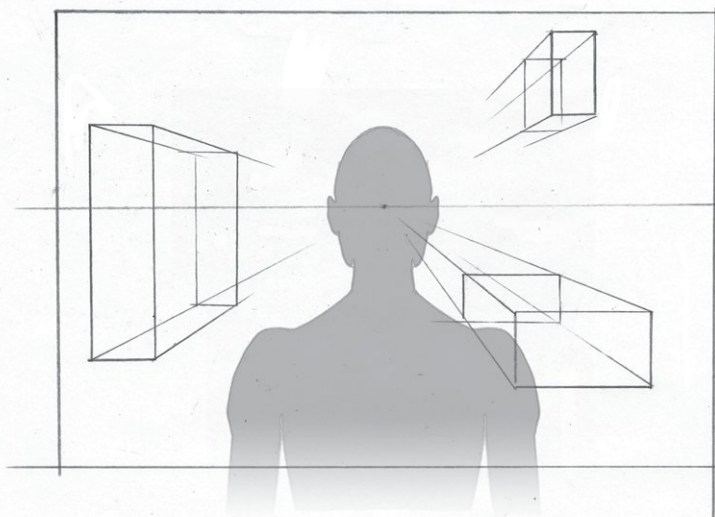
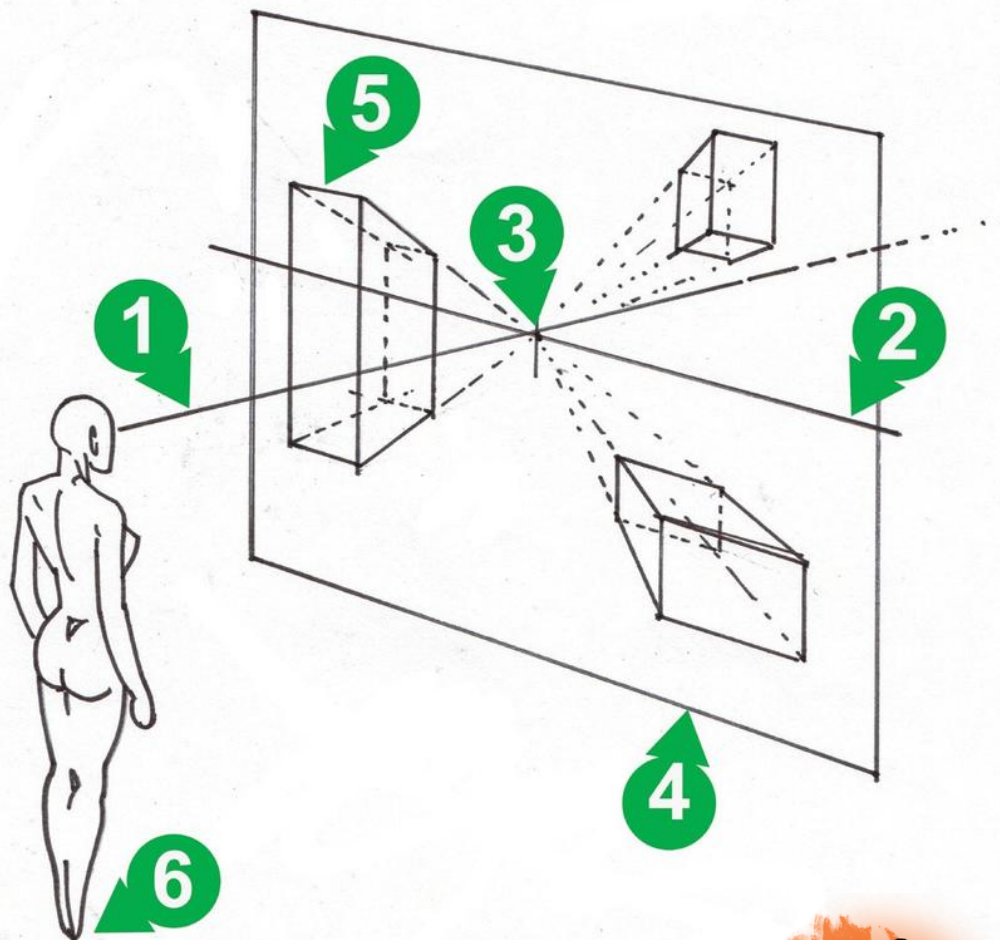
I don't think I could have said it better... let alone said it (the HA! was mine, though). Here's an example of perspective in comics:



#10 PERSPECTIVE

TERMINOLOGY - Familiarize yourself with these and keep this handy for future reference. Okay, I reworked and simplified this whole section. In reviewing the original tutorial, I'm baffled as to why I included something so darn confusing. Hope this makes more sense now.

- **1. Line of Sight:** An imaginary line travelling straight out from the viewer's eyes to infinity.
- **2. Horizon Line:** A line drawn horizontally across the picture plane at the point of intersection with the line of sight.
- **3. Vanishing Point:** The point at which receding parallel lines appear to converge at the horizon line.
- **4. Picture Plane:** An imaginary vertical plane through which the spectator is viewing the scene. Each panel in a comic book would be considered to have been drawn on this imaginary plane; you can actually consider each panel in a comic as this imaginary plane.
- **5. Objects in Perspective:** Objects drawn on the Picture Plane, whose parallel lines recede to the vanishing point(s).
- **6. Standing Point:** The point on the ground plane where the spectator is standing; useful in creating grids.



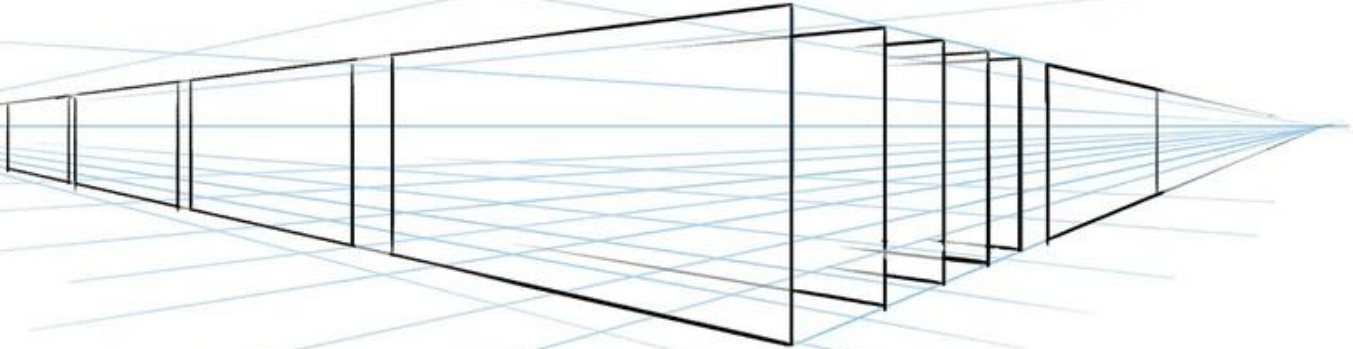
- This image is the comic book panel we illustrated in the image above. Note the ghosted image is of you, the viewer.



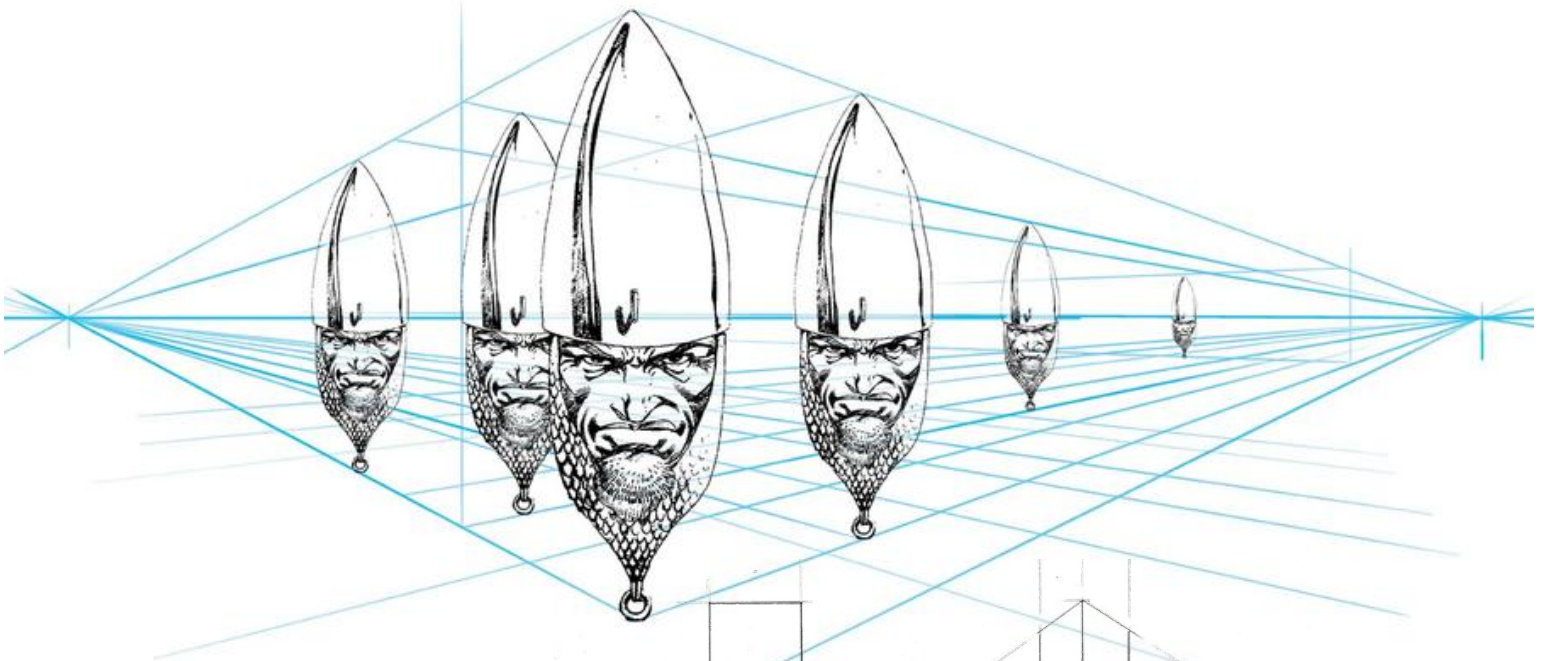
#10 PERSPECTIVE



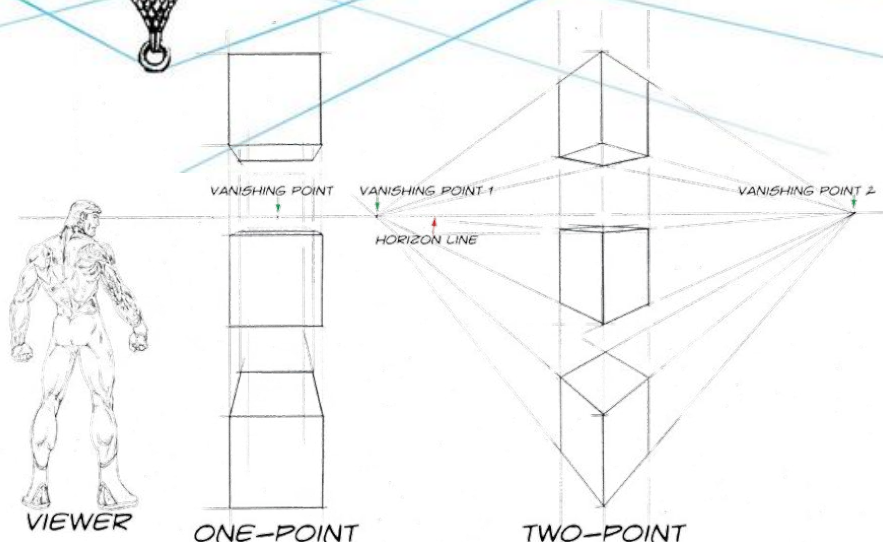
- **Convergence:** The principle of convergence states that when objects with parallel sides are seen in perspective, parallel lines receding from the viewer appear to meet at the horizon line. These receding lines are known as vanishing lines, and the point at which they converge is known as the vanishing point.



- **Foreshortening:** When objects of equal size recede into the distance, they appear to get smaller the farther they are from the viewer. This is known as foreshortening. When the amount of perspective is slight, the foreshortening is gradual and barely noticed; when the perspective is severe, the foreshortening is dramatic and powerful.



- We are going to be talking about one- and two-point perspective. Here is a simple example of each.

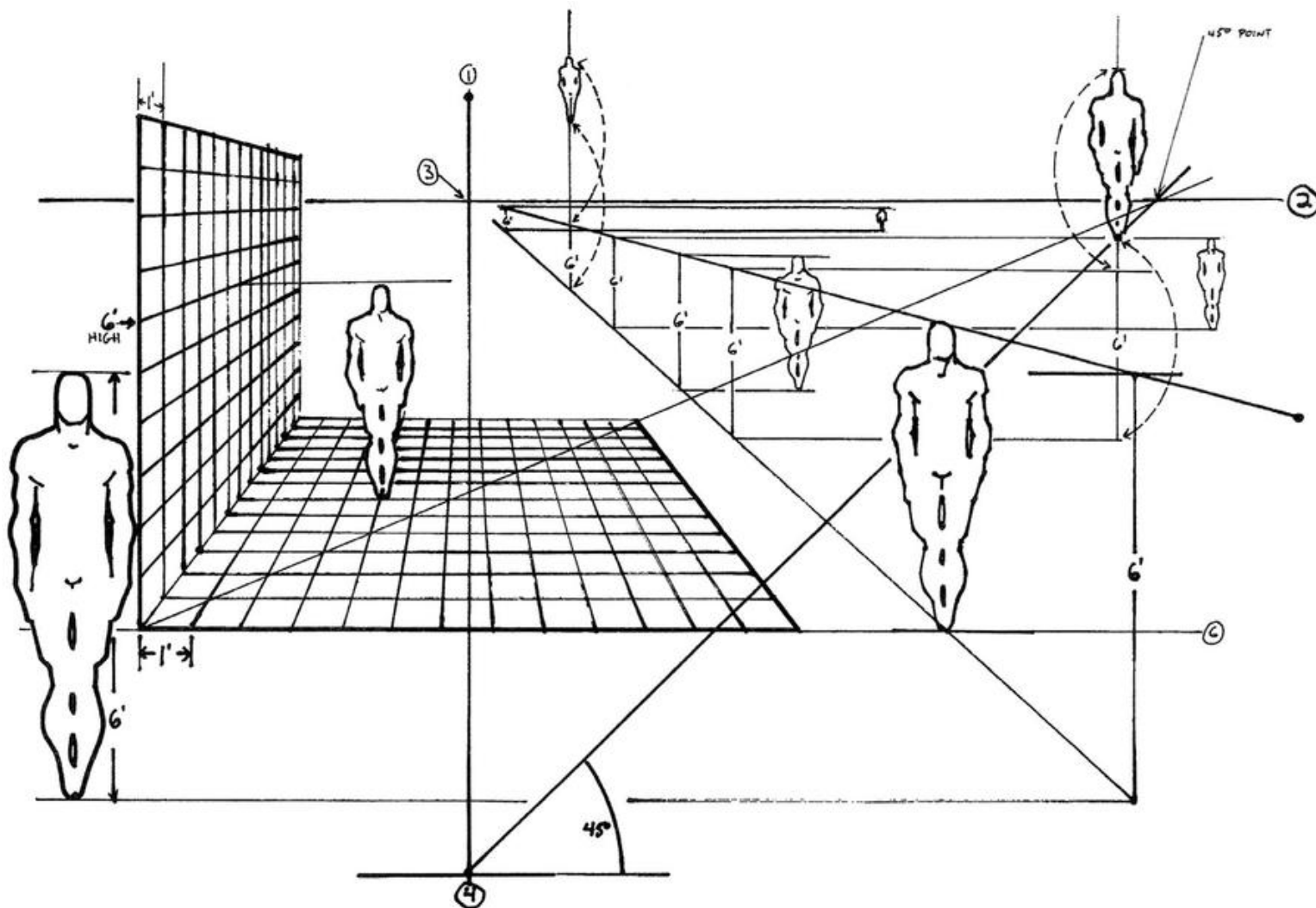




#10 PERSPECTIVE

ONE-POINT PERSPECTIVE - Below I've constructed a one-Point Perspective grid. Use the terminology figure from the previous page as a guide. Note how the standing point (#6) from the previous page translates to an actual drawing. Note the 45-degree line (A) drawn from the standing point to the horizon line, and pay attention to how this vanishing point was used to help construct the floor and wall grids. Note how the series of six-foot-tall figures were determined by locating balance points (in this case, where there feet hit the ground) and following the vanishing lines from the top of the head to the vertical lines drawn up through the balance points. It also illustrates how to measure and construct appropriately-scaled figures anywhere within the image, standing on the ground or floating in the air.

There is a lot going on here, and not much space to teach it. Study it and figure out the best that you can. I can see that there will be many future lessons dealing with this difficult but necessary subject.

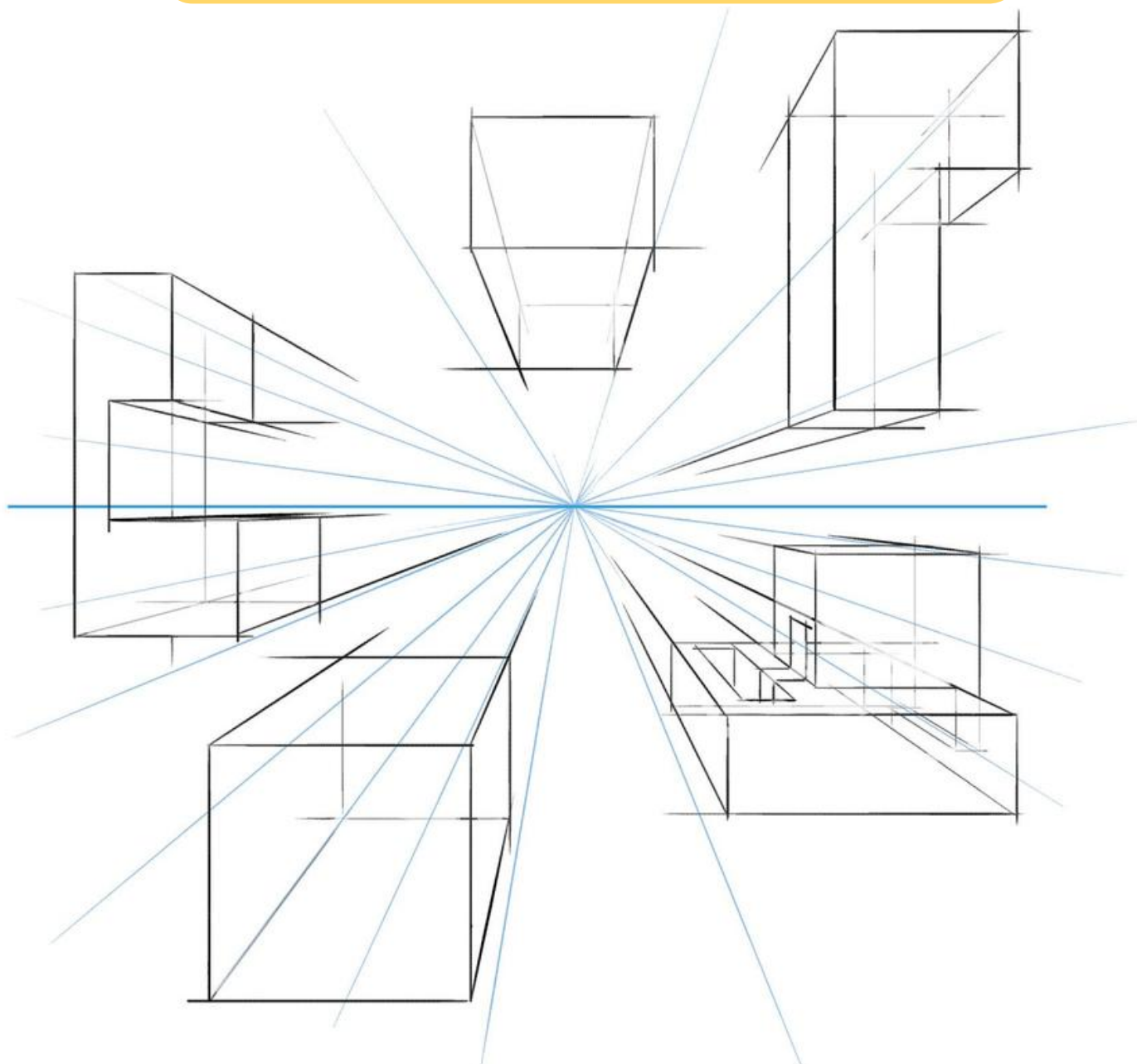


- That's quite a lot to glean from the original *Brutes and Babes* tutorial. Though it looks more advanced, and it is, everything you see above is drawn using the same principles you can see drawn in the foreshortening illustration featuring Arkon's head. As you become more comfortable with perspective, create your own version using this as a guide. I find that once I start messing with pencil and paper, things really start to click, and what was dark and confusing becomes an "Aha!" moment.

#10 PERSPECTIVE



EXERCISE: ONE-POINT PERSPECTIVE - Here is an example of one-point perspective. All of the vanishing lines converge to only one vanishing point, the rest of the construction lines for every shapes' height and width are vertical and horizontal. This is the simplest form of perspective and the best place to start learning. Study how the shapes are built. The side facing the viewer is drawn using only vertical and horizontal lines, squares, rectangles, other few other odd shapes with right angles... simple, right? Then to add depth and the mighty third dimension, draw a line from each corner back to the single vanishing point.

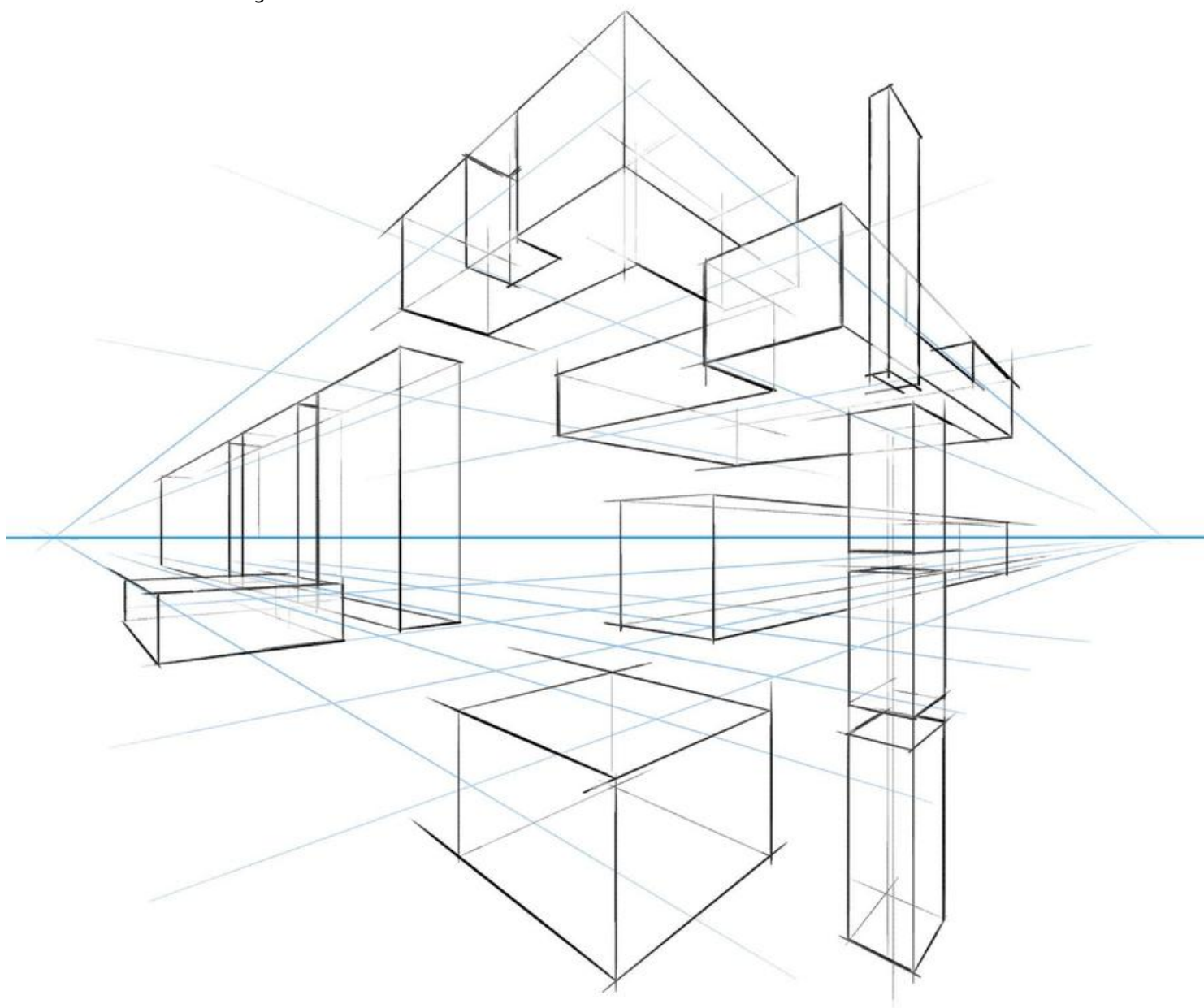


- Okay... your task is to recreate the one-point-perspective image pictured here. Start with the horizon line, add your vanishing point and go to town. A T-square, triangle and straight edge will be most helpful. Start simply with a simple square or rectangle and build up to more complex shapes. Have some fun!



#10 PERSPECTIVE

EXERCISE: TWO-POINT PERSPECTIVE - All right, take a gander at the two-point perspective illustrated here. It's a little bit harder than one-point. Here, the vanishing lines converge to two separate points, and the only other construction lines, the height lines, are vertical. Study the shapes, and how the vanishing lines help create depth. Your next task is to recreate this image. Rule out your horizon line, plot your two vanishing points and start drawing!



Well, there we have our first real look at perspective, a real bare bones kind of look as well. I know that a lot of this might not make a whole lot of sense to start, but keep trying and keep drawing, and in future chapters, I'll go into more detail. Boy, seems like I've said that before... there's just so much to drawing. But hang in there with me and, eventually, we'll get it all covered. Until you turn the page...Keep Drawing!

#11 QUESTIONS



BRUTES AND BABES!

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS
BY BART SEARS

Everyone has questions, and they should. After all, asking questions is the only way to learn what you don't know, and, frankly, being asked questions is extremely helpful to me when I teach. Really makes me, and most likely any teacher, think through what they do. I love questions so...

...let's get to it!

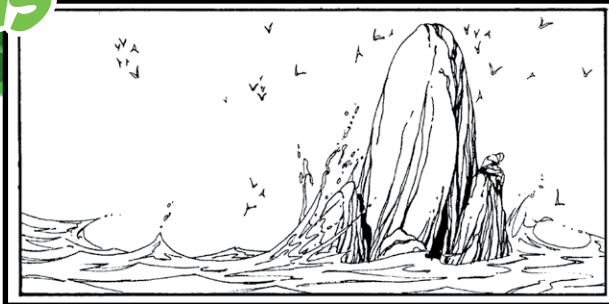
LOOK, BRUTE,
MORE AWESOME
QUESTIONS!





#11 QUESTIONS

Ron Windom asks about the terms related to drawing a comic-book page. Below are some common terms relating to comic-book construction.



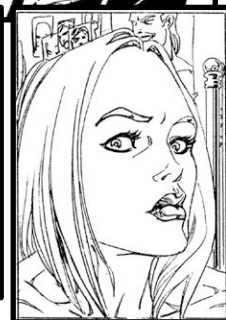
• **LS/LONG-SHOT:** Panel drawn from a great distance where some details are visible.



• **ELS/EXTREME LONG-SHOT:** Panel drawn from such a great distance away from an object that details, such as people or cars, are not visible.



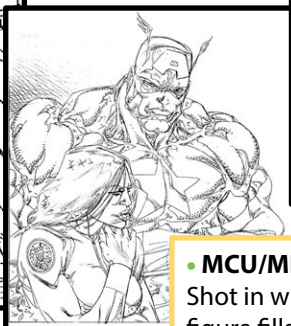
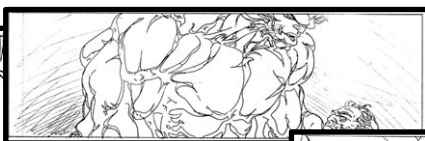
• **CU/CLOSE-UP:** Shot in which a head or hand, etc. fills the panel.



• **MS/MEDIUM-SHOT:** Panel drawn in which the figures (or main object) are visible from head to toe.



• **ECU/EXTREME CLOSE-UP:** Shot so tight that just a small part of an object is seen, such as an eye or a finger, etc., fills the panel.



• **MCU/MEDIUM CLOSE-UP:** Shot in which half of the figure fills the panel.



• **UP-SHOT:** Panel in which the reader is looking up at an object.



#11 QUESTIONS



• **WORM'S EYE VIEW:** Or extreme up-shot; panel which is drawn looking up at an object in an extreme perspective, such as looking up at Captain America from the toes of his boots.

• **BIRD'S EYE VIEW:** Or extreme down-shot; panel drawn looking down upon an object from far away.

• **DOWN-SHOT:** Panel in which the reader is looking down at an object.

• **ESTABLISHING SHOT:** Usually a long shot, drawn to show the readers where the character(s) are, like a bus station, etc., who the character(s) are, and the spatial relationships between the character(s) and their environment.

• **SPLASH:** Any page of a comic-book consisting of only one panel, usually the first page of a story and usually where the title and credits are placed.

Some additional terms...

• **PANEL:** Term used to describe the different boxes which border the drawings that make up a page of comic-book art.

• **PAGE:** An individual sheet of paper on which a single comic-book illustration, consisting of from one to six (on average) panels have been drawn.

• **GUTTER:** The blank area between panels.

• **DOUBLE-PAGE SPREAD:** Two connecting pages of a comic book across which a single image is drawn. Note: a double-page spread can also contain any number of panels as well.

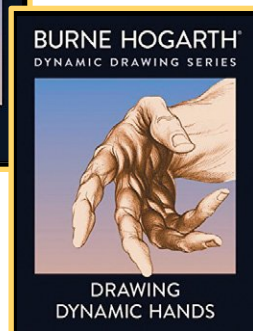
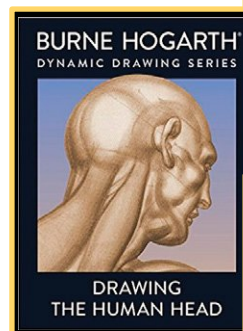
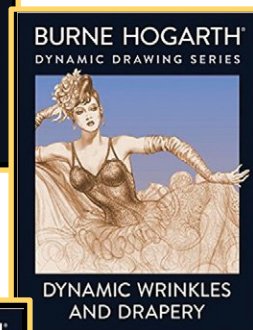
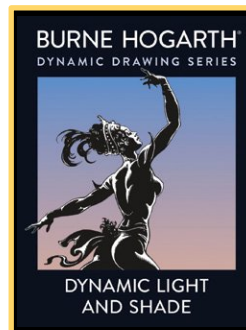
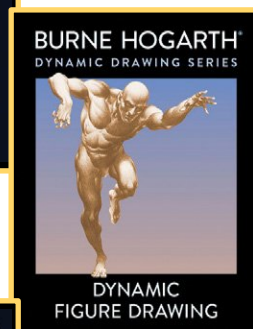
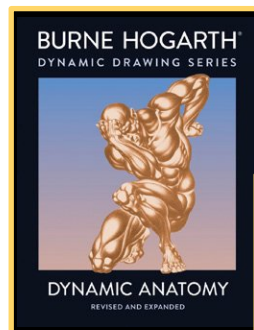


#11 QUESTIONS

Sherri Whidden asks about helpful books or videos. For those of you who followed my original column, you know that I recommended several books on drawing and drawing comics. Among them, I can recommend a series of books by **Burne Hogarth**:

Dynamic Anatomy,
Dynamic Figure Drawing,
Dynamic Light and Shade,
Dynamic Wrinkles and Drapery,
Drawing the Human Head
 and
Drawing Dynamic Hands

You will notice as you study these books the excellent command Hogarth has of the human figure and its relationship in space. His dynamic drawing style is filled with energy and well-suited as a teaching tool for superhero comics. The only reservation that I have in recommending these books is that they are so powerful and absorbing that I have seen many new students dive so completely into the musculature that Hogarth scripts that they overlook the beginning stages of learning to draw (proportion, perspective, layout, design, etc.) and become lost in hundreds of drawings of formless muscles that could barely be called human (not Hogarth's drawings, but their own). Remember, learning is about discipline, it's important to learn in stages, and to master one stage before going on to the next. For instance, you cannot add numbers before learning how to count them. So, study these books, learn from them, but don't become so enchanted with the musculature that you overlook the basic Block and Cube figure that Hogarth has used to construct each and every dynamic figure in his books.



Burne Hogarth (December 25, 1911 – January 28, 1996) was an American cartoonist, illustrator, educator, author and theoretician, best known for his pioneering work on the Tarzan newspaper comic strip and his series of anatomy books for artists. – Wikipedia.com

All of Burne Hogarth's dynamic books are available for purchase online.

#11 QUESTIONS



Blaine Smith writes and asks that I write a couple more plots a la the Brute plot, so that you guys can have more material to work from. Okay, here goes!

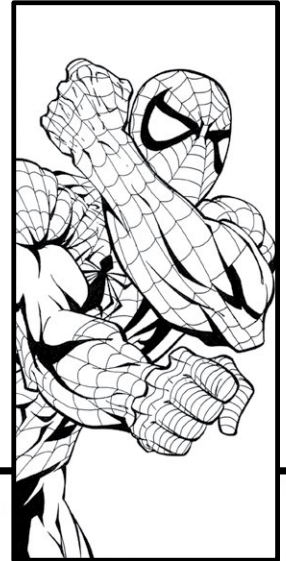
The Venom plot. (Venom and Spider-Man reference provided.)

Panel 1: Venom, drooling, muscles pumping, swings high over the city.

Panel 2: CU of Venom very pleased with himself, having just spotted the target of his search.

Panel 3: MS of the target of his search, Spider-Man, hanging upside down under a ledge of a building, webbing his clothes in place.

Panel 4: Spidey, clinging to the wall, goes about his business, coming towards the reader, and fails to see the shape looming ominously behind him. It is of course, Venom, preparing to strike.



• Well, that's a pretty easy one; now let's try something a little bit more difficult...



#11 QUESTIONS

The Hulk plot. (Hulk reference provided.)

Panel 1: ECU of the Hulk's face, slightly puzzled, a little bewildered, and of course, slightly pissed off.

Panel 2: Pull back for LS of deserted city street, Hulk standing in the middle of it, looking around, and thinking. The cars on the street appear as if their owners just left them in the middle of driving home - it looks like there should be people all over but that they just disappeared.

Panel 3: MCU Hulk, bending down to peer into one of the cars (your choice) whose door was left open. No answers are inside it.

Panel 4: MS of Hulk angry, slamming the door of the car, the car visibly rocking, the windows shattering from the impact.

Panel 5: MCU Hulk, crying out in mingled rage and confusion, obviously tormented.

Panel 6: CU Hulk, wiping his sweaty face with his hand, looking miserable and depressed.

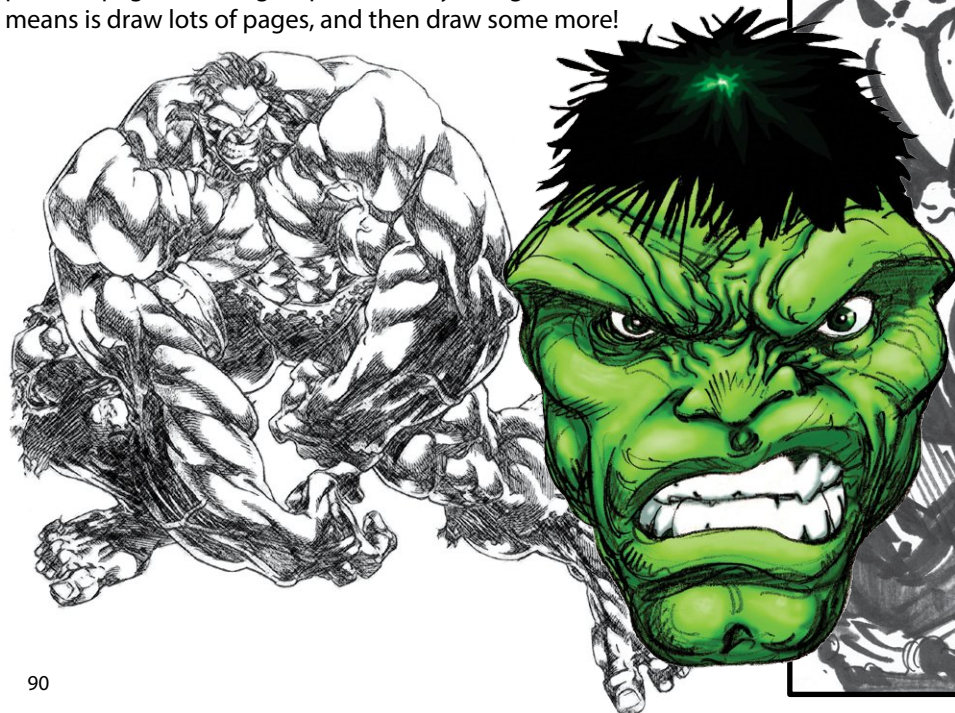
Panel 7: ECU Hulk's face still covering much of it, key on one eye, which is wide and staring in shocked surprise...

HULK MIGHT
BE TOUGH, BUT HE
DOESN'T HAVE MOVES
LIKE THESE...



- Do at least three thumbnails of each page before doing a final thumbnail and moving on to roughs. Complete each stage of drawing before moving on to the next!

You can never get enough plots/scripts to draw from and you can *never, ever* draw enough pages of storytelling; comic art is all about narrative art. What that means it's all about drawing paneled pages, creating sequential storytelling. And what that means is draw lots of pages, and then draw some more!



#12 STRUCTURE



BRUTES AND BABES!

**DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS
BY BART SEARS**

In this chapter I thought it would be a good idea if we went back to anatomy. We haven't taken a close look at the human figure in quite a while (and we're probably overdue). So without any hesitation, let's jump right into muscle and...

...let's get to it!

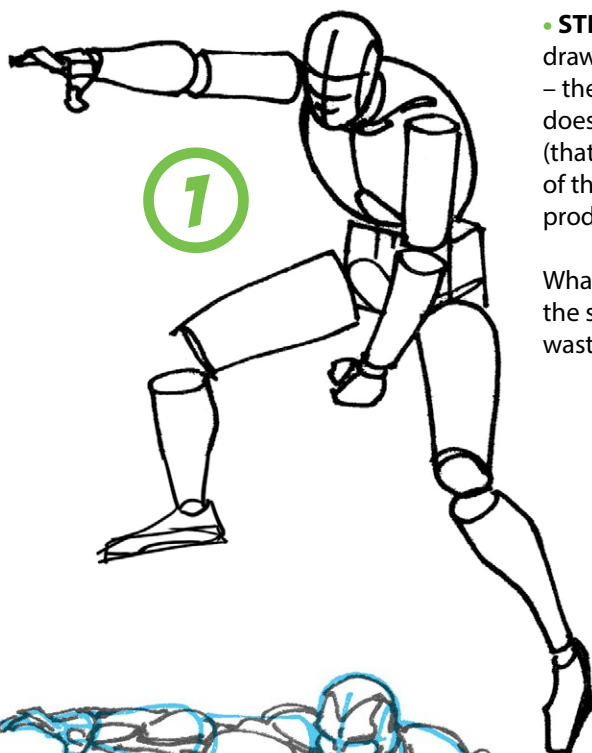
CHECK OUT
THESE GUNS,
SUCKA!





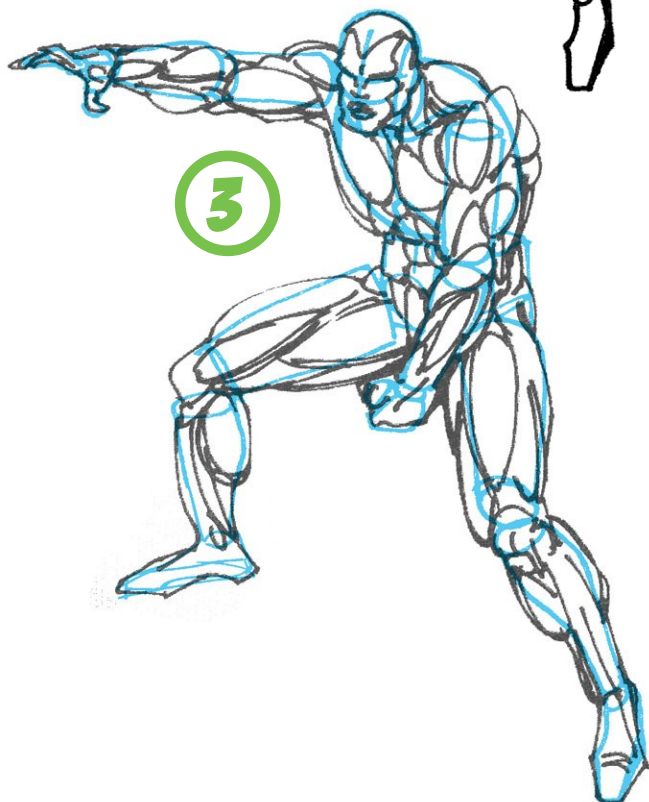
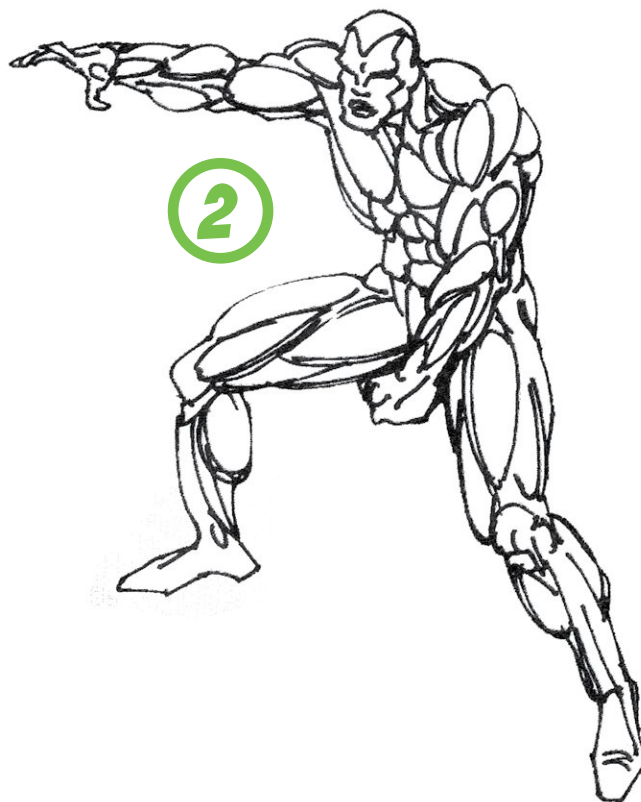
#12 STRUCTURE

THE IMPORTANCE OF STRUCTURE - I decided we needed to hesitate just a bit so that we didn't get too far ahead of ourselves. The most important thing (and there seems to be a lot of important things) about drawing muscle is this: if the structure underneath is wrong, the musculature that you draw over it will be wrong! Wrong! Wrong! If your proportion is off, muscle will not fix it. If you draw your legs too short, muscles will not lengthen them. If you twist your torso too far, pretty muscles will not keep the back from looking broken.



• **STRUCTURE 1** - Structure is important in all aspects of drawing, as well as in whatever you draw. Think of it like this – the best-looking car in the world isn't going anywhere if it doesn't have an engine, gasoline, oil, or someone to drive it (that also sums up my knowledge of cars!). The point is that all of the parts are equally important and necessary to the final product.

What all of this boils down to is spending the time drawing the structure and making it correct so that you don't end up wasting your time finishing an already wrong drawing.



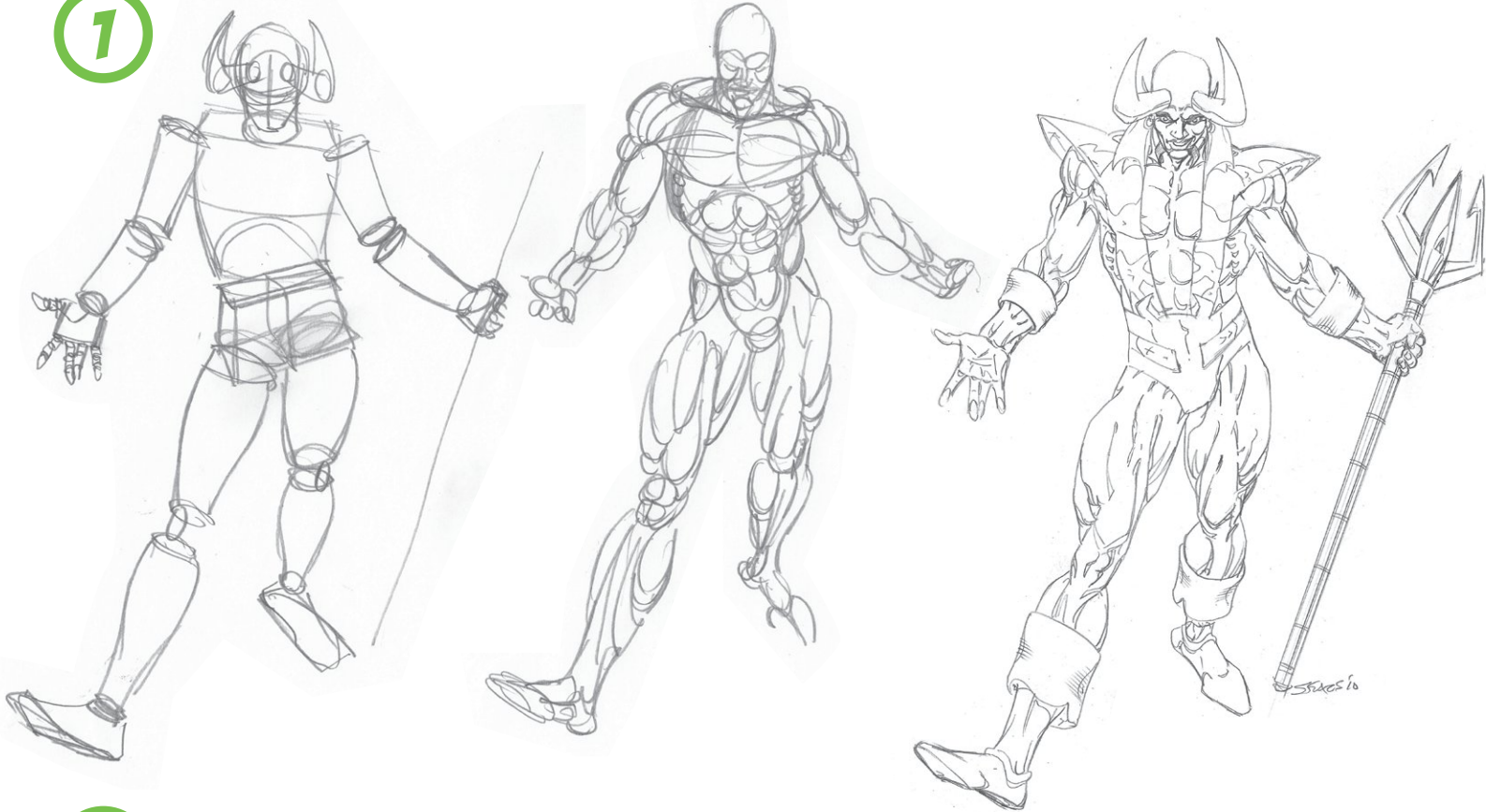
• **STRUCTURE 2** - The Brute figure to the left was drawn over the structure Brute above it. Never sacrifice structure! Bad lines over good structure are infinitely better than good lines over bad structure.

#12 STRUCTURE

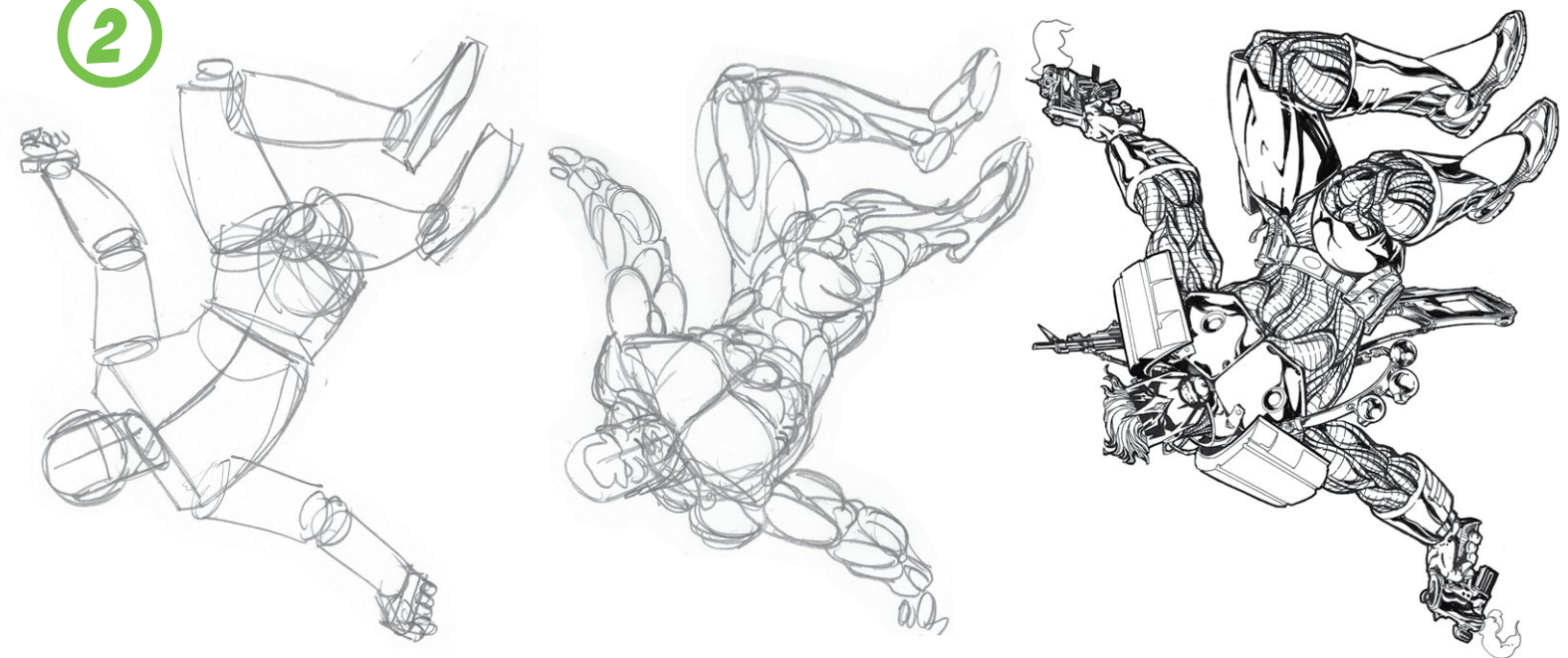


- Can't draw and study enough figures! The two figures drawn here are deconstructed with a simple Block and Cube structure, then the bubble muscle construction drawn over that. Pull out your favourite comics and deconstruct your favourite drawings. It's a great way to learn and practice Block and Cube and bubble muscle construction!

1



2





#12 STRUCTURE

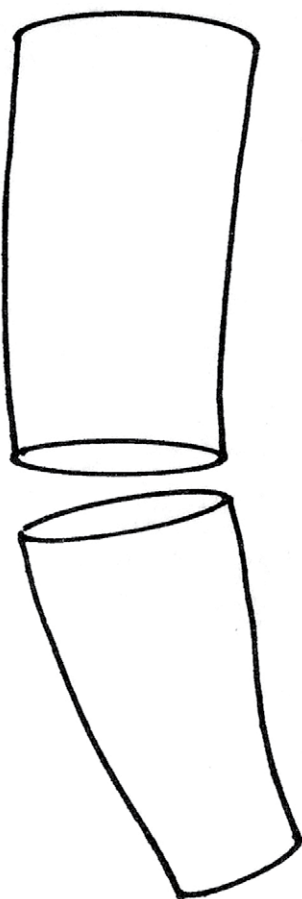
STAGES - Talking about structure brings some other things to the forefront of my mind, and another word that keeps popping up is "Stages." When you are drawing comics (or anything, for that matter), you can't just sit down with an ink brush and pump out a good, finished comic page. Things have to be done in stages. You have to start with little thumbnails to gather your thoughts, and then enlarge them to your 10 inches by 15 inches paper size. You have to pay attention to the storytelling, the placement of figures, the different looks of the characters, perspective, background details, etc. Things have to be corrected and made to look good before they can be finished, penciled, and then inked.

Before any figures can be finished and penciled, the costume or clothing details have to be roughed in. Before the details can be roughed in, the look of the character has to be roughed in (the facial features, the character's musculature, etc.). Before the look of the character is roughed in, the basic structure must be drawn.

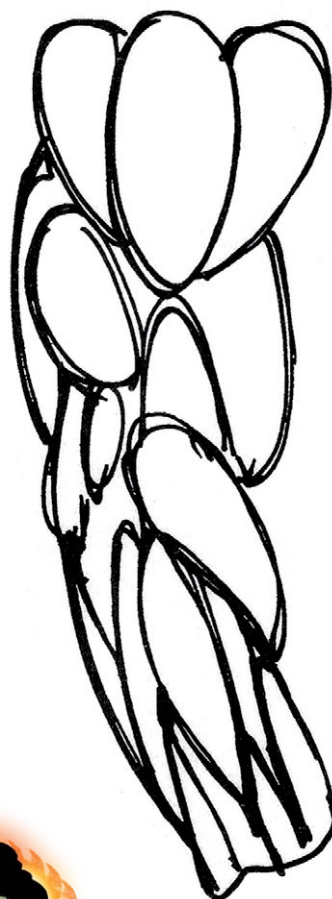
I hope that you get the idea. Everything must be drawn in stages, and each stage must be completed and correct before you continue to the next. stages is a good word!

• THE ARM

- Block and Cube form drawing of an upper arm (I realize these are cylinders of sorts...)



- Here we have the bubble muscles drawn in over the simple form. Note where the muscle forms attach onto the cylinder forms, i.e., how far down does the deltoid (the shoulder muscle) come. Look at this, study it, and see how the forms overlap and wrap around. Picture this arm in your mind and start building a strong mental image that you can turn and twist into any angle. See it clearly in your head. To get better, dissect everything you see.



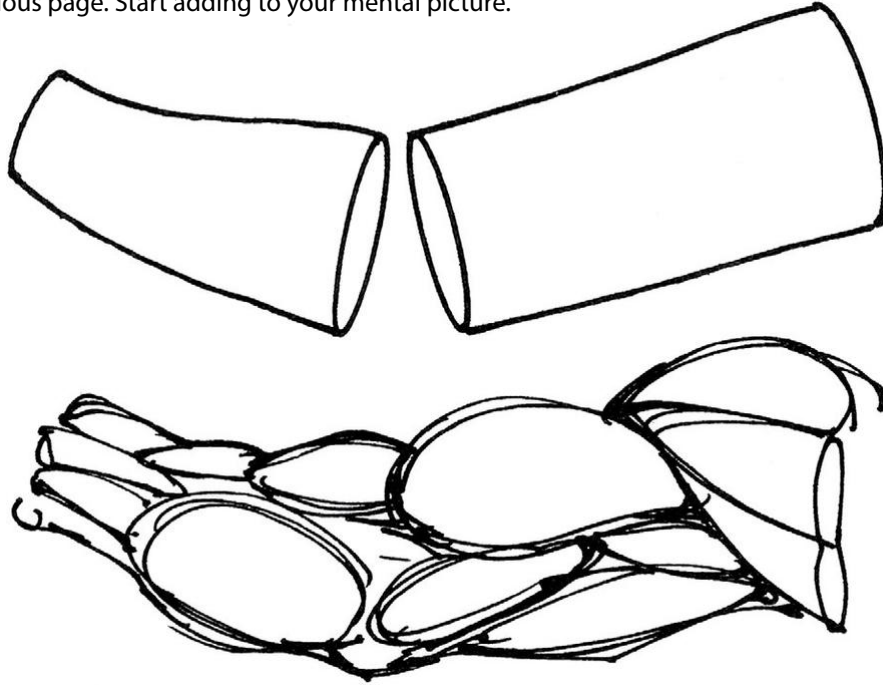
**ALWAYS
STUDY!**



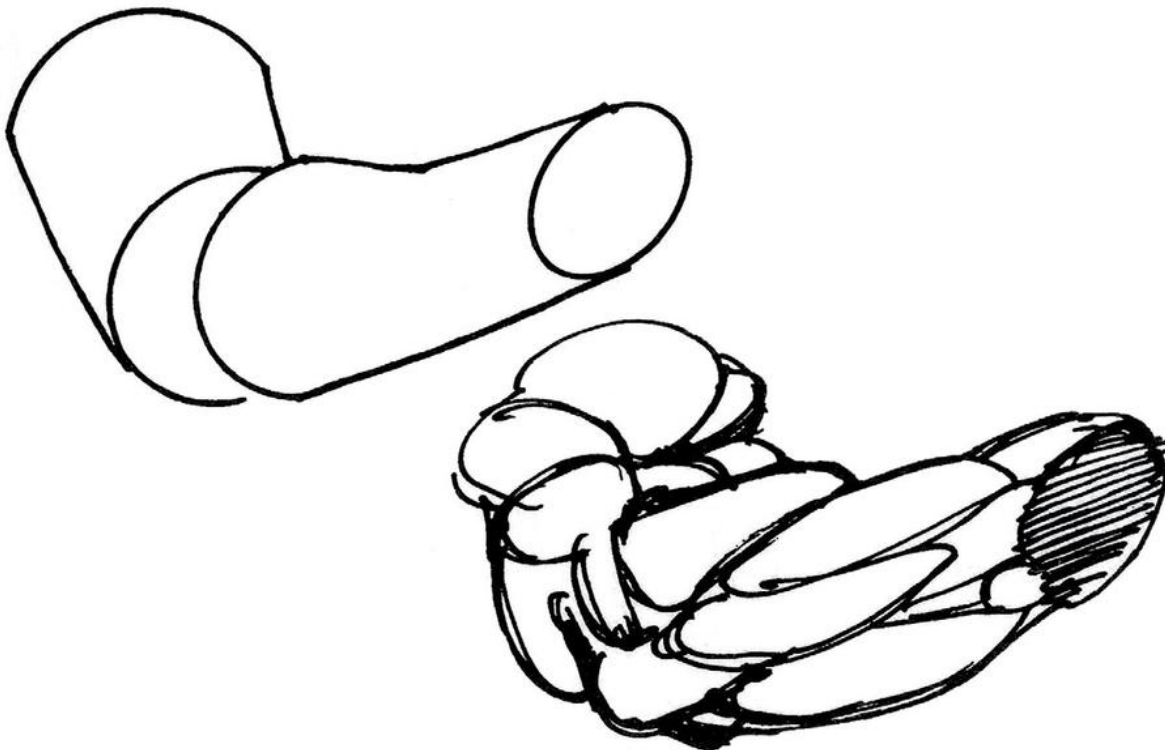
#12 STRUCTURE



- **THE INNER ARM** - Here is a view of the inner arm. As always, study the proportions, see the bubble masses, and look back and see how they relate to the outside view on the previous page. Start adding to your mental picture.



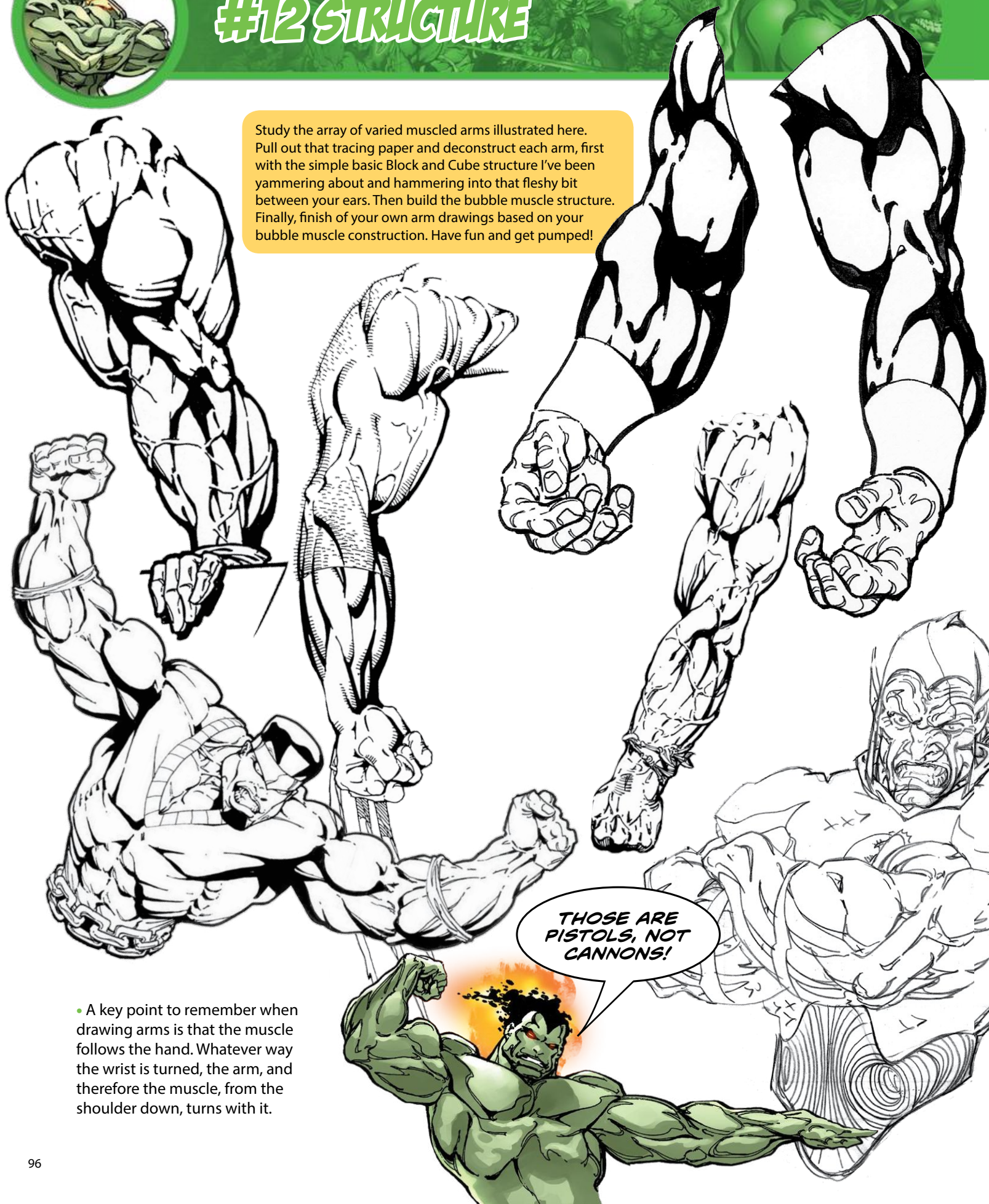
- **THE FORESHORTENED ARM** - Here I've drawn a foreshortened arm. Notice how the muscle masses overlap and turn around the form. Go back to your mental picture and see if you can "animate" your arm into position. Notice how the masses still connect to the cylinders in the same places in this view as they did in the straight-on shots. If your understructure is drawn with care, you shouldn't have any trouble attaching the bubble muscle masses from any angle. Just remember, the shape and mass of the forms and the spots where they connect to the structure. Keep in mind the fact that nothing worthwhile comes without a lot of hard work and sweat. Drawing is no different. Practice those arms until they ripple with dynamic muscle and power.





#12 STRUCTURE

Study the array of varied muscled arms illustrated here. Pull out that tracing paper and deconstruct each arm, first with the simple basic Block and Cube structure I've been yammering about and hammering into that fleshy bit between your ears. Then build the bubble muscle structure. Finally, finish of your own arm drawings based on your bubble muscle construction. Have fun and get pumped!



THOSE ARE
PISTOLS, NOT
CANNONS!

- A key point to remember when drawing arms is that the muscle follows the hand. Whatever way the wrist is turned, the arm, and therefore the muscle, from the shoulder down, turns with it.

#12 STRUCTURE



- At left is the cover to *The Dark* #1, from Continuum Comics. I've shown it here to further illustrate the concepts we've been talking about. Note the way in which The Dark's upper torso is bent and twisted.

Laying down the muscle masses without a solid structure to build on would have been a complete nightmare. Note the musculature of the arms. See how the muscles turn correctly in relation to the turn of the wrist. Compare these arms in the finished illustration with the anatomy laid out in the bubble mass drawings of arms on the previous pages.

.....

- When you're drawing, don't be afraid to use a mirror to reference your poses and to see how the parts of the body actually twist and connect and interact with each other. Study the drawings that you see, and try to figure out why the figures work or don't work. If you see something that you like, take out your paper and draw it, copy it, and call it whatever you want. But put it into your head and learn from it.



#12 STRUCTURE



Here's what I'd like you to do: grab a sheet of tracing paper, place it down on top of this image and draw the Block and Cube understructure for each figure, each and every one! You can even try to tackle the 'raptor, if you like! Enjoy and Keep Drawing!

#13 SILHOUETTES



BRUTES AND BABES!

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS
BY BART SEARS

One thing I've been asked a lot is why I did *Brutes and Babes*. Sitting here there are a few reasons, I guess, and they all seem equally important.

To start with, teaching is fun. I enjoy showing somebody something they've been struggling with, and seeing their work improve because of it. It may sound geeky, but I enjoy helping people, and I try to please everybody as best I can. Also, teaching can be like magic. People come to me with problems, I sit down and show them some answers, and you can see the bells going off in their heads and the amazement on their faces. That pumps me up and keeps me hungry. Another part of it is that most of the time comics are drawn by the seat of your pants, in what seems like the speed of light. I found that you do things without thinking, and in some cases without knowing why! A lot of things are done because they feel right, or because they work, whatever any of that really means. As usual, I've run at the mouth longer than I anticipated, so let's move right on to Silhouettes!



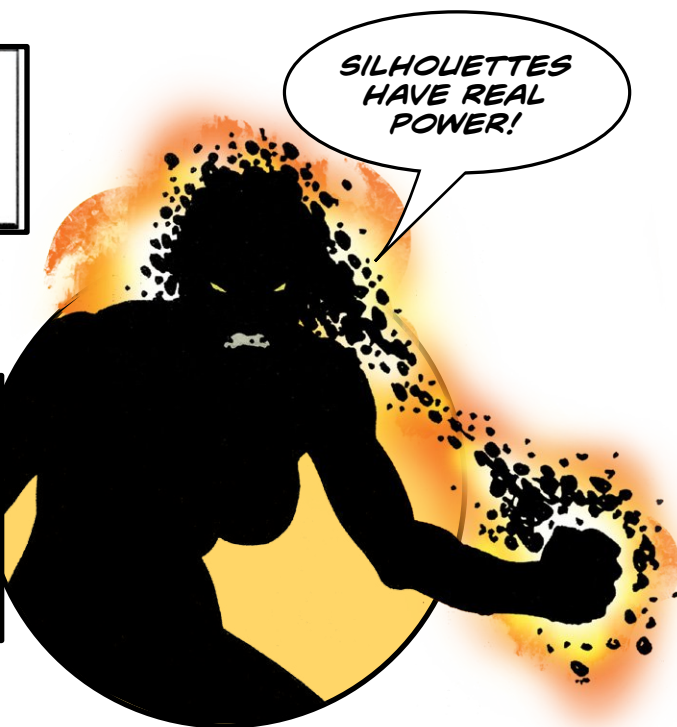
#13 SILHOUETTES

Silhouettes are a limited but useful aid when drawing comics. They can have a lot of impact when used correctly. Although drawing silhouettes is less time consuming than drawing out everything in detail, it's not a shortcut. Like everything else, there should be a reason for it. Thought needs to be given to silhouettes to ensure that they work. (On the next page, we'll talk about what "works.")

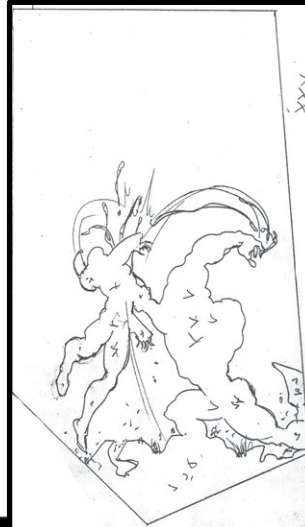
- Here is a panel from X-O #14, obviously featuring X-O and Turok. The silhouette makes sense in the story, and everything is clear and readable.



- Silhouettes can be used as a framing element to highlight specific characters or actions. They can be used artistically within panels to hide elements, saving them for a more impactful reveal. They can be used as a design or structural element in the foreground or background. Often times a silhouette can be an effective way to create a crowd or battle scene.



#13 SILHOUETTES



- We use silhouettes for several reasons. They can easily pinpoint an action, or something, or somebody (or any combination of those things) very quickly, since there is no extraneous detail to confuse or distract the reader. Mood can be created with silhouette, such as a feeling of impending danger, a feeling of entering the unknown, mystery, terror, etc. The silhouette must work within a story. Care and thought have to be given to its usage to make certain the story will benefit, not suffer.

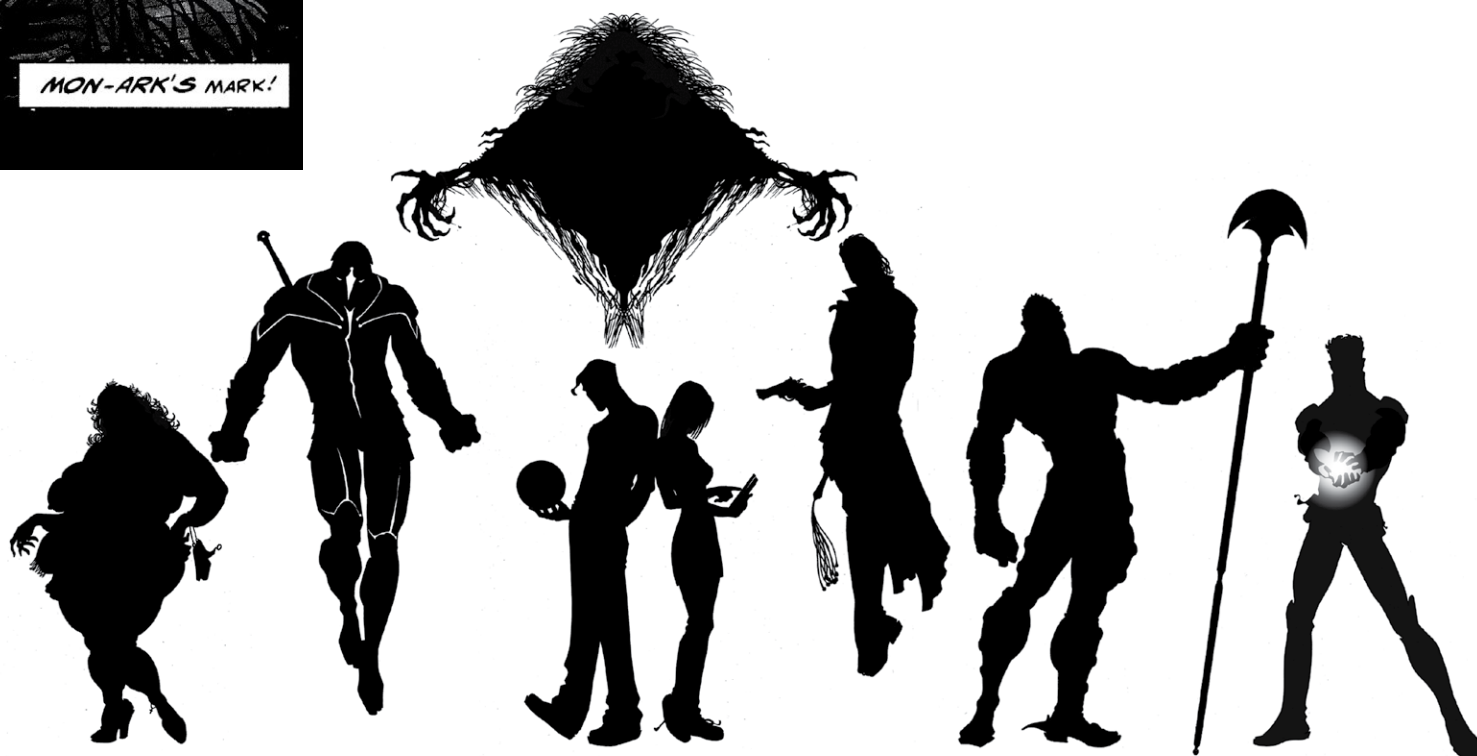


- Just keep in mind that the silhouette is just another storytelling tool, not a shortcut. If you have a good reason to use one, then by all means, go ahead. A good silhouette can add a lot of drama to a story.



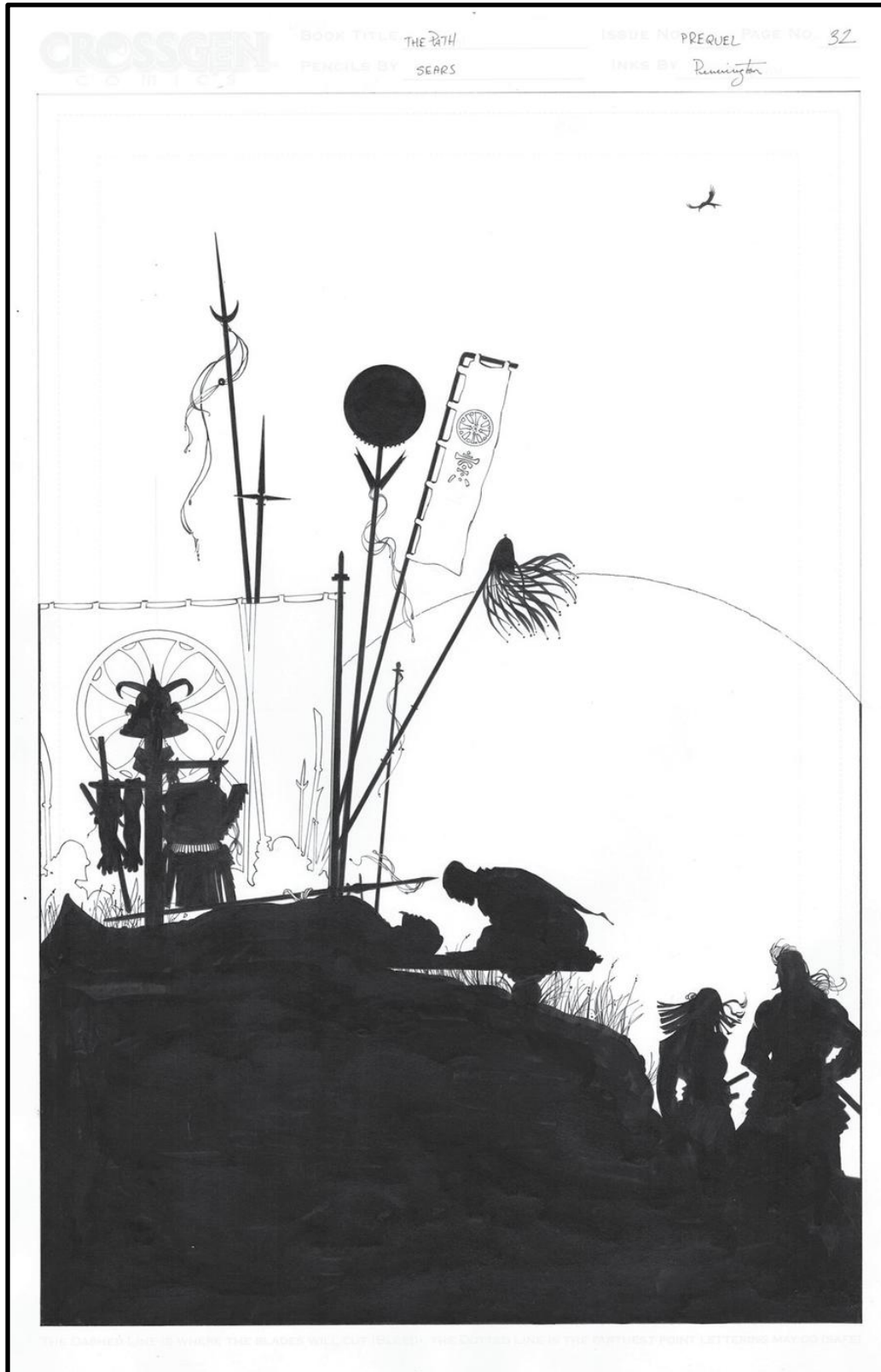
#13 SILHOUETTES

- Here is another panel from X-O #14. We know who it is and what he is doing, so those criteria are met. What this silo (short for silhouette) also does is set up a feeling of uncertainty and impending danger about Turok's future. He is in a new strange land, and starting on a death-hunt for Mon-Ark, his deadly Bionasaur enemy. That makes it work well in the story.



- Lineup of silhouetted characters. Every character distinctive and easily recognizable - so well tagged, even though they aren't familiar characters.

#13 SILHOUETTES



• Some rules to drawing successful silhouettes:

1. Keep the action simple. For instance, isolate an action. If there is a battle with hundreds of antagonists, just silhouette the two fighters who are important, etc.

2. Keep your drawing clean and clear. As an example, keep a figure's arms out, away from the body and with the legs separated. Don't have too many silhouetted objects touching them (breaking up the figure's outline), etc.

3. Tag your figures. We have to know who each figure is when it is silhouetted. Tags can be as simple as The Batman's ears, or as subtle as body posture and body language, but make sure that your tags are clearly visible. Tag = strong and subtle details of a figure or object that give the figure its own unique look or identity.

4. Your silhouette must be functional. For example, if the character is supposed to be fishing, then he must have a fishing rod in his hand and it must be visible. If a character is firing a gun, we have to be able to see the gun clearly. If someone is getting kicked, it must be clearly seen, etc.

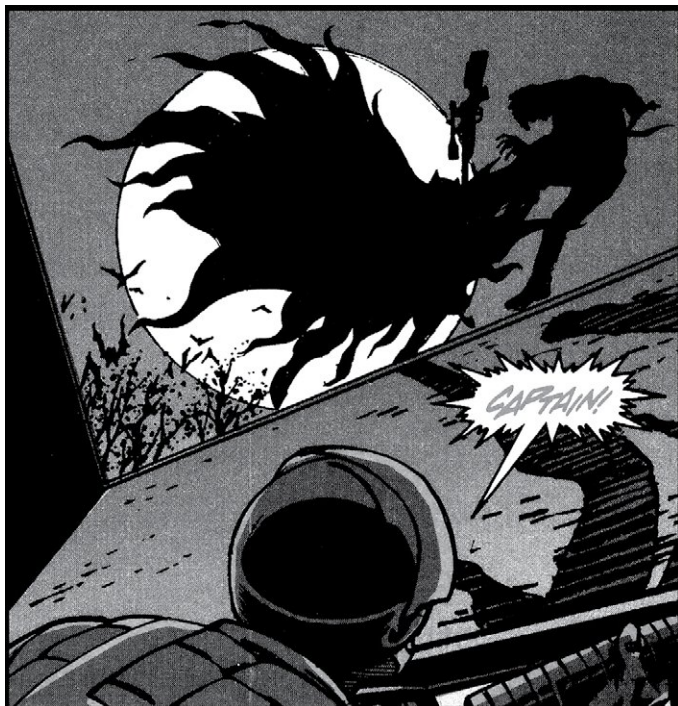
I think that's about it for rules, except for this last one: don't use a silhouette just to use a silhouette. Have a good reason.

To our left we have a silhouette page from *The Path* #1. It is clear and readable, the figures are tagged and recognizable, even dead Todosi and his massive sword laying on his body. Note the white silhouetted samurai behind the silk partition. It's great when it works!



#13 SILHOUETTES

- Here is another panel from *Turok* #1. Look at it and see if it meets the criteria we've established.



- This is a silhouette from *Dark Knight* #22. We know which one is The Batman, the gun is clear, and although The Batman's cape hides some of the action, it's abundantly clear that the rooftop sniper just got popped.

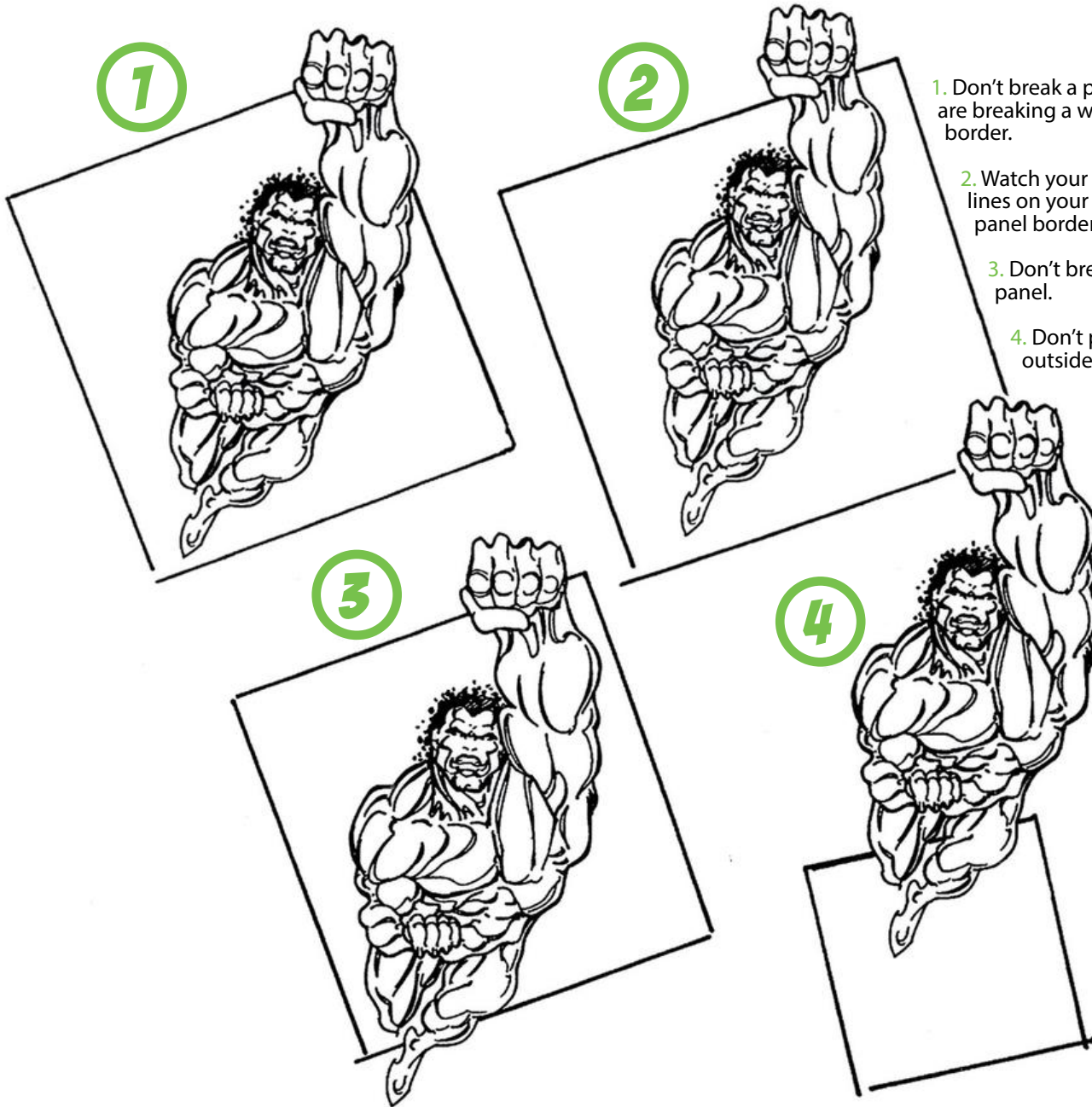


- Above is a three-panel sequence from *Turok* #2. Take a look at it for a second and read it, if you will, before we go on. It's quite clear in the first panel that somebody is in the woods, unknown to the sleeping Turok. But, by panning in on those two silhouetted figures and doing it slowly over the next two panels, we accomplish a few more things. One, we show a passage of time. Two, we make it clear that these people are stalking Turok and are actually sneaking up on him. Three, we build some suspense by pulling in closer, but still never see who it is, and by slowly revealing the rifle, we show danger. That's a little bit about silhouettes. I hope it makes some sense to you. Now, let's talk a little about...

#134 BREAKING BORDERS



BREAKING PANEL BORDERS - I don't know how many times some guy has brought me his samples and I've said, "That's wrong. You can't break the panel border there." And he says, "Well, where and when can I break the panel border?" The best answers to that question are nowhere and never! Obviously, you see it broken all the time. When I started this section, I figured that I broke the borders fairly regularly. But then I started looking through a stack of the books that I had done, and I only found a few instances where the borders were broken, and they were minor breaks, at that. The point is that borders don't really need to be broken to tell an exciting, action-packed story. But if you want to do it, I thought I would write down some guidelines for you to go by.



1. Don't break a panel corner unless you are breaking a whole lot of the panel border.

2. Watch your tangent lines. Don't let lines on your figure bleed into the panel border lines.

3. Don't break opposite sides of a panel.

4. Don't push the figure too far outside of the panel.



#134 BREAKING BORDERS

Like everything else in comics, don't break panel borders without a good reason. If you break a border, make it a super-good reason. A panel border should only be broken if it adds great impact to the story. If the reason is powerful enough that breaking the border adds all kinds of drama and excitement, then go ahead and do it. It's a special thing, so use it wisely. For instance, Joe Dudd is hailing a cab on the streets of New York, and his hand is bursting out of the panel (to make sure every cabbie in the known universe can see him, I guess). That one instance takes away all the impact from the panel where Superdudd (Joe Dudd sans street clothes) consumed with rage, bursts through every ship in the alien armada (that just devastated the Earth, by the way), and we see Superdudd's powerful fist and part of his rippling forearm burst through the border around the panel that should have existed. I hope that illustrates my point. Break the border only when the action of the story calls for it, and only when you feel it will have the most dramatic impact.

- Here we have a page from *Eclipso* #2. Any of you familiar with my run on this book (I can't say anything about what happened after I left) will know that Eclipso is within the story, as well as outside the story, almost as a narrator or host. Since that was the case, he was breaking and bending and creating borders at will, and I used that as much as possible in telling the story. Eclipso was an exception to the rule and was treated as such. Some of the same constructive rules apply, but only at certain times and in certain places.

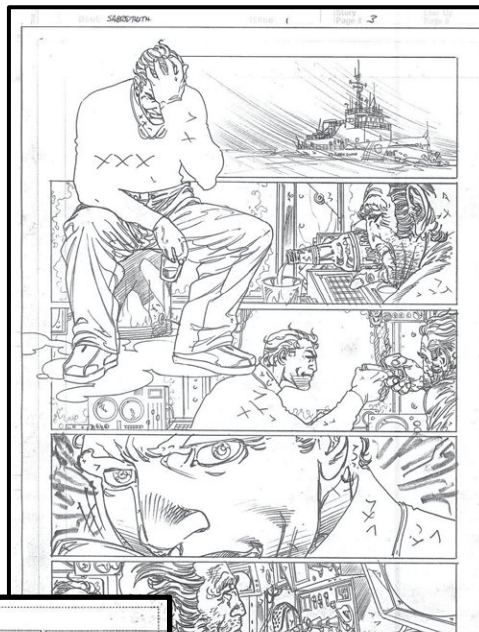


- Remember: only break the border when everything is right, never just for the sake of it.

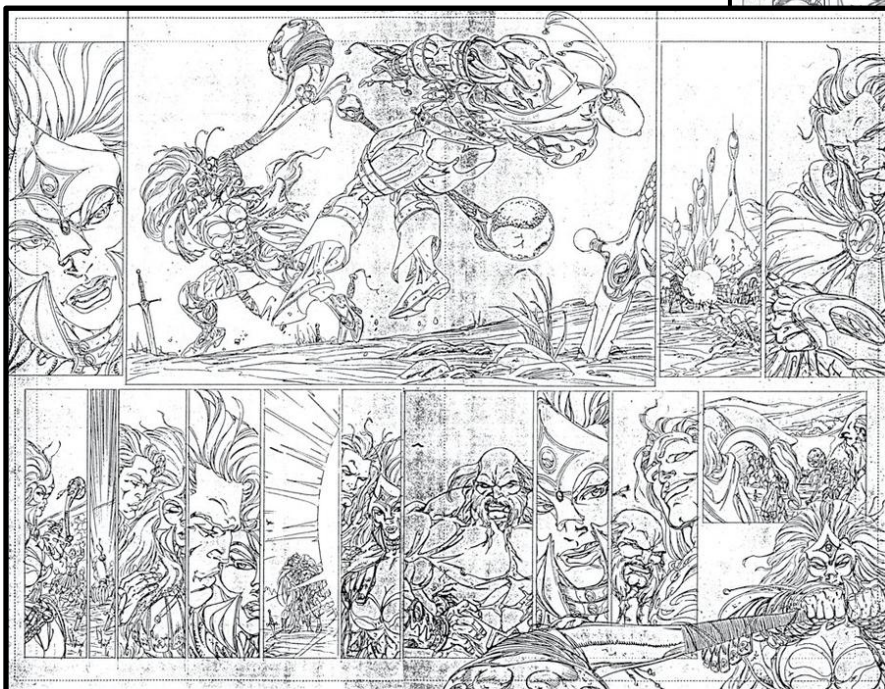
#134 BREAKING BORDERS



In searching for new broken border imagery for this chapter, I realized something, I actually almost universally follow the rule I wrote earlier, "Never break the panel border!" I was a little surprised, truth be told. I've drawn a lot of pretty powerful, jumping-off-the-page kind of art, you'd think borders would be trashed everywhere, but really 99.9% of it all is contained with panel borders.



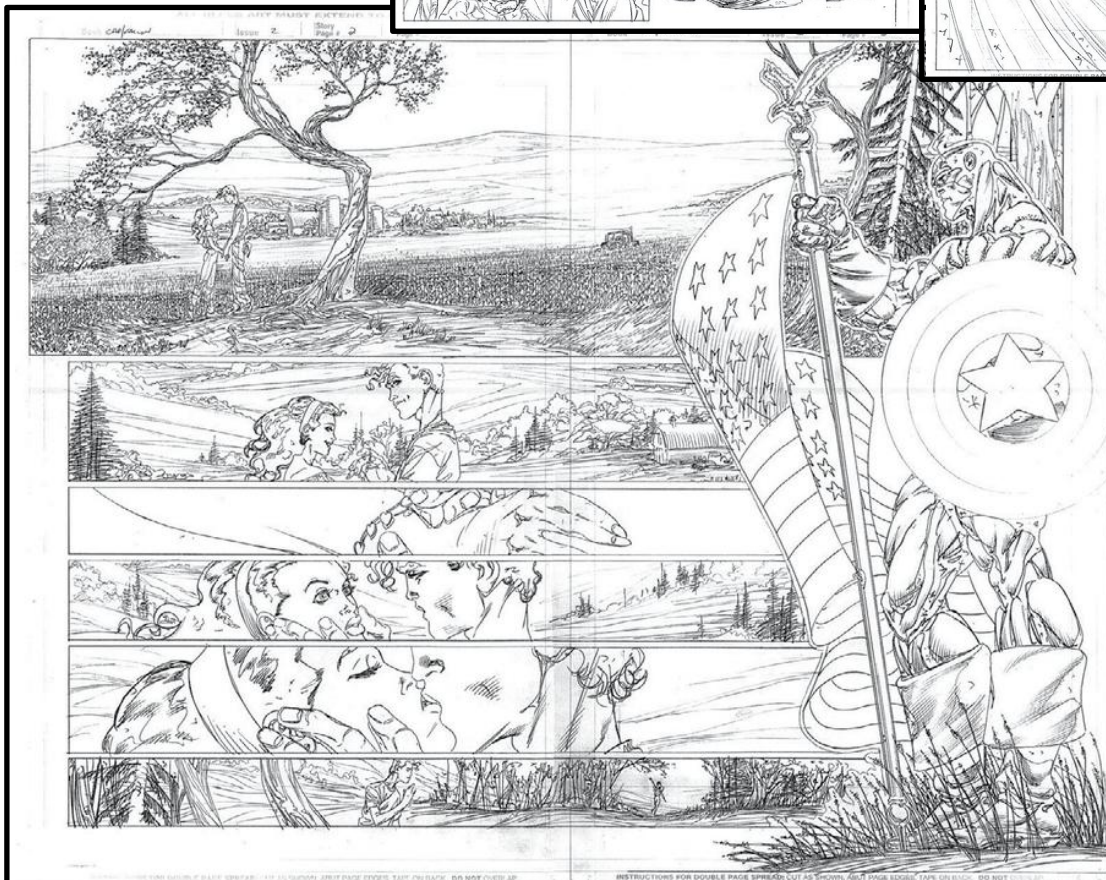
• As you look at these images, nobody is leaping out of a panel, or jutting out of a panel. What I did discover was that when I do break the panel border, I do so somewhat symbolically.



• I've discovered that, much like with the *Eclipso* page, I break the panel border with large figures, usually on their own. Often they are doing an action, or in a conversation, and they overlap panels that detail that action, or conversation.



#134 BREAKING BORDERS



- Sometimes it's clearly symbolic, like Captain America overlapping the scene of the boy and girl in the cornfield.

- Most often, the symbolic nature of it plays into a more interesting overall page design. Crazy.

#14 MOVEMENT AND MOTION



BRUTES AND BABES!

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS
BY BART SEARS

In this tutorial, we're going to talk about Movement and Motion, and how to create the feeling of life in your drawings by the use of the above. You must remember that even when someone or something is at rest (standing still), it is moving and alive. You have to breathe this life into the things that you draw, and not just with speed lines and effects, but with actual motion drawn into the people (or whatever) you illustrate. So, bear with me. There are some relatively simple rules and guidelines to follow that can help you learn how to capture movement in immobile, two-dimensional drawings.

Let's get on with it!

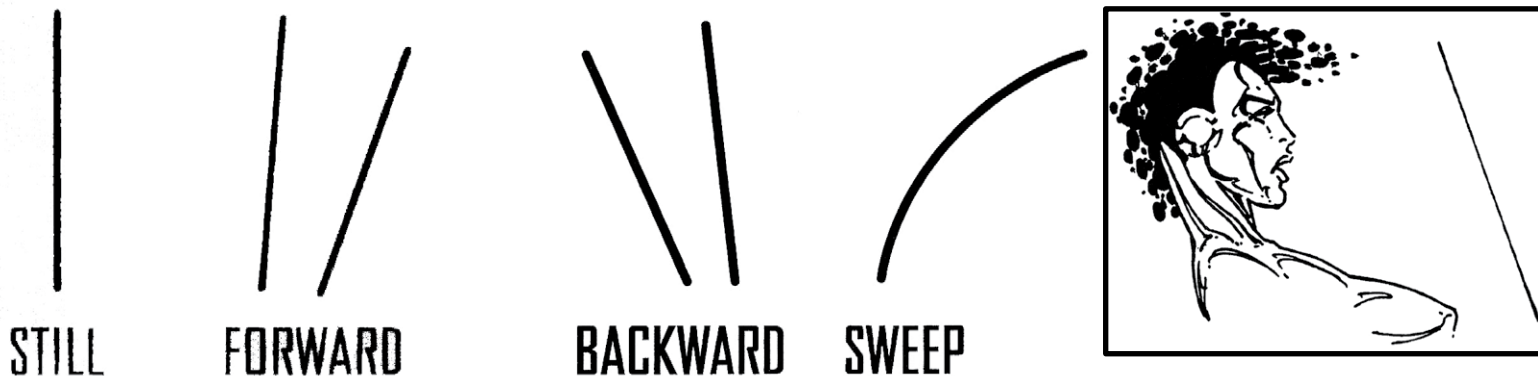
I'M FULL OF
MOTION AND HAVE
A VERY INTERESTING
PERSPECTIVE... ASK
ANYONE.



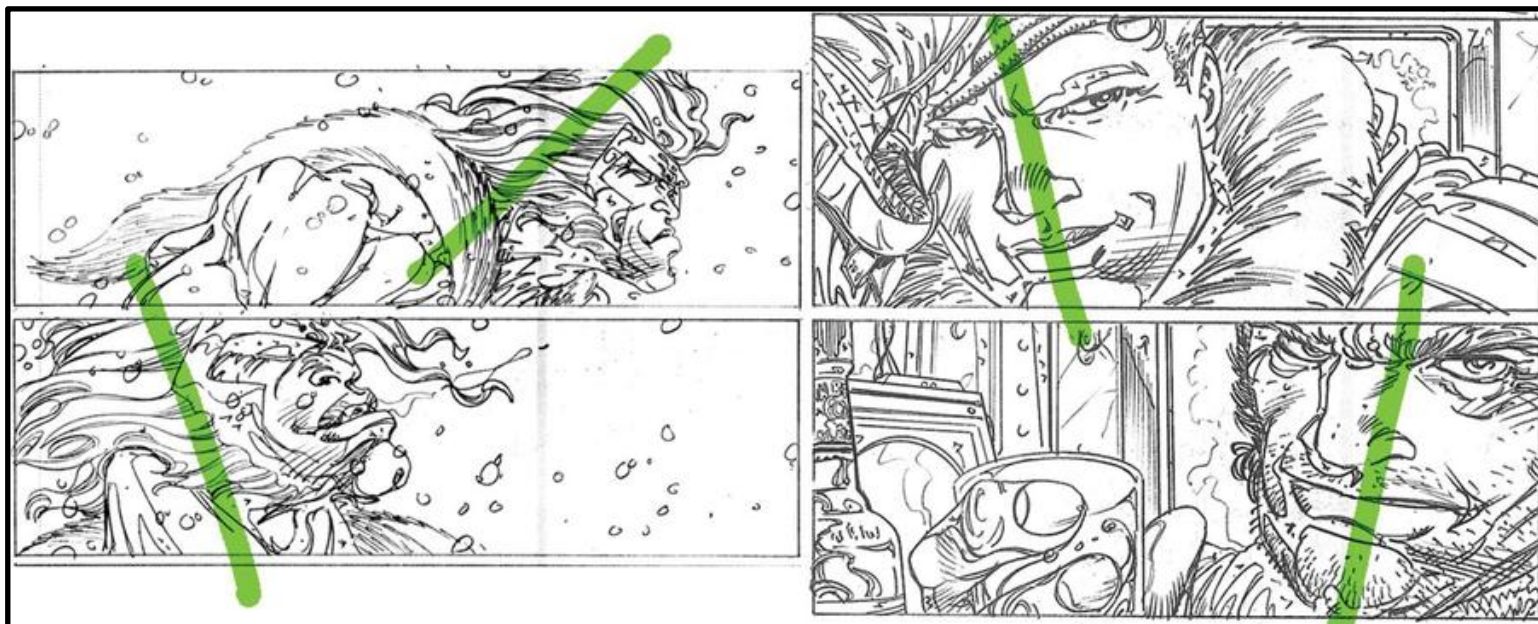


#14 MOVEMENT AND MOTION

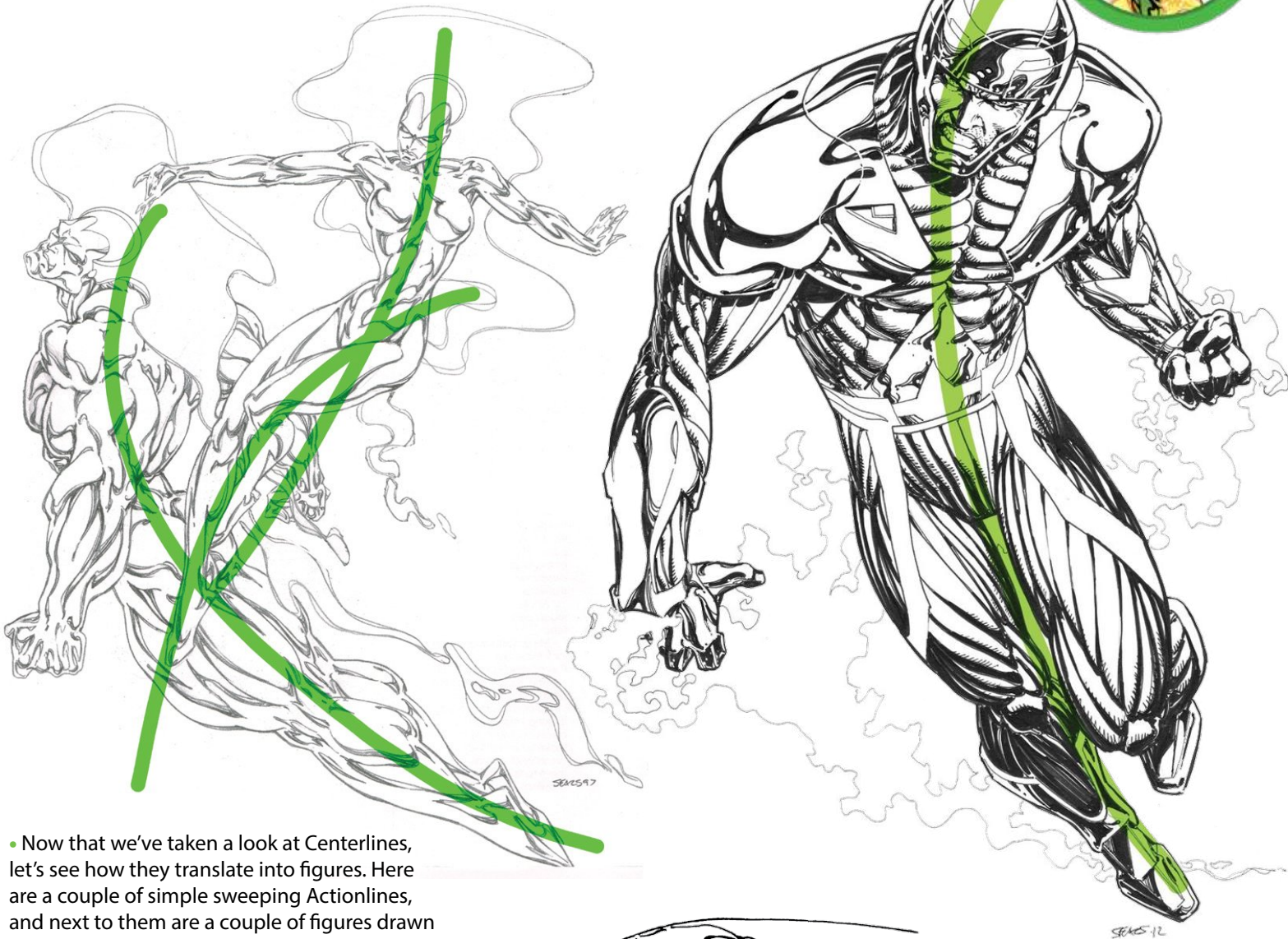
BASICS OF MOTION... THE CENTERLINE. - The simplest way to start to create motion in figures, or whatever's moving, is with the Centerline. The Centerline is the line drawn through the center of a figure, following the line of the backbone, which describes the general action of that figure. Take a look at the Centerlines, which can, from this point onward, also be referred to as Actionlines, that I have drawn below. Notice that a line drawn parallel to a border, or to the side or bottom of the page, creates a feeling of stillness or no motion. Note that if you tip this line forward or backward, even very slightly, you start to create movement. Now look at the last Actionline drawn below, the one labelled Sweep. This type of Centerline, alone and in conjunction with his relations, is responsible for most, if not all, of those pulse-pounding fight scenes that everyone really loves in their favorite comics. Sweeping Actionlines are the most noticeable, and the easiest to execute, because the actions they generally describe are a grossly-exaggerated kind. As in acting (I believe, anyway), it is always easier to draw (or play) characters acting larger than life than it is to draw (or play) the characters whose movements and mannerisms are of a more subtle nature. Therefore, we will start with the big, sweeping Actionlines.



- In the Babe head drawing, notice how the Centerline, which is tilted slightly backwards, creates a feeling of Babe snatching her head back, away from something or in reaction to something. Centerlines are the basics of action.



#14 MOVEMENT AND MOTION



• Now that we've taken a look at Centerlines, let's see how they translate into figures. Here are a couple of simple sweeping Actionlines, and next to them are a couple of figures drawn using these Actionlines as Centerlines (those two words are virtually interchangeable). Take a good look at the figures. Obviously, there is more going on with them than a simple Centerline, which we'll get into shortly, but notice how the Flow (there's that word again) of the figures matches the flow of the corresponding Actionline. Like everything else in drawing powerful comics (a little blurb there), motion and movement is built up in stages, and each stage has to be done correctly before going onto the next one, or your finished work will have problems, started from the first rushed mistake and continuing on through each successive stage. Approach your work intelligently, think things through, and try not to rush through it while you are learning. Spend the time now, and down the road things will come together easier and your work will be better and more successful because of it.

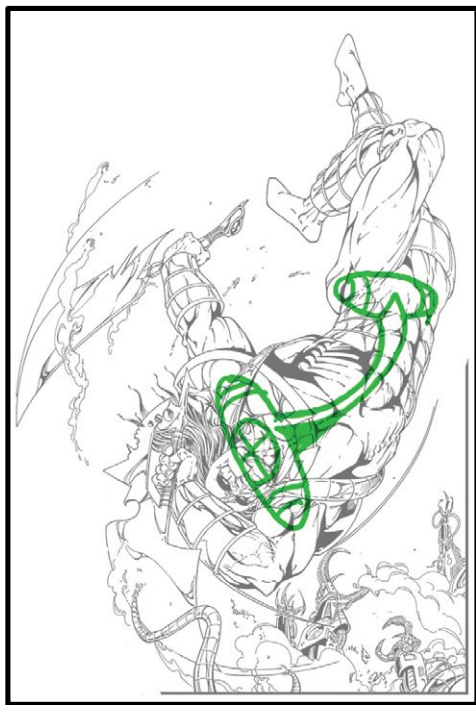
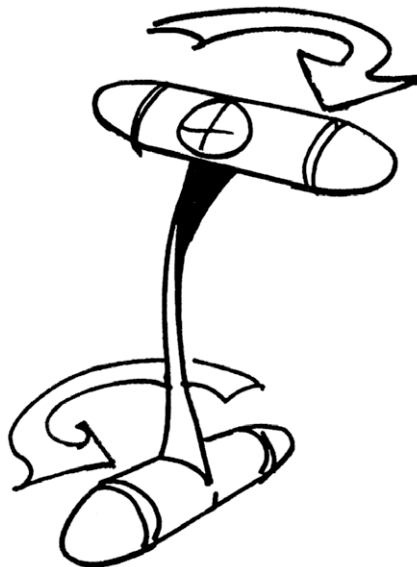


• When drawing over a Centerline, construct your figure strongly, using the Block and Cube method, and remembering to use the Actionline as the basis for the spine, and building off of that. For simple, straightforward actions, keep the flow of the arms, legs, and head within the same basic sweep of the Actionline. For more involved and *twisted* actions, please read on.

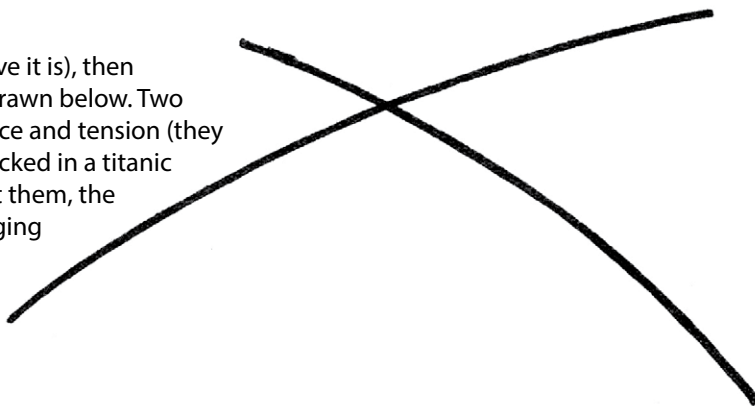


#14 MOVEMENT AND MOTION

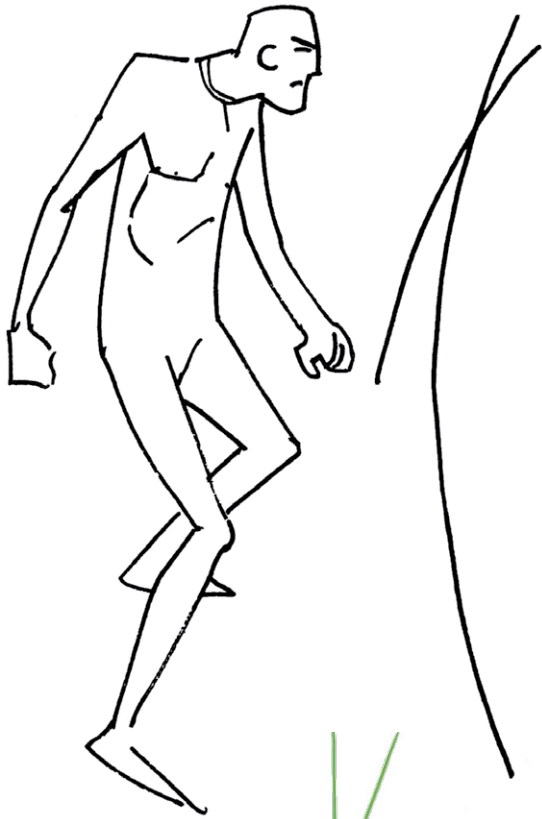
- To create even more motion within a figure, try twisting the torso. What that means is to turn the shoulder line to an angle with the hip line, as better explained in the drawing to the right. The shoulder can dip towards the hip, but not too much. Remember, don't twist the shoulders to an angle of more than 45 degrees to the hips in any direction! By twisting the hips and shoulders, you create tension within a figure, which creates motion. Parallel lines create a feeling of tranquillity and stillness, angled lines create motion. More on this below.



- If it's true that parallel lines suggest no motion (and I believe it is), then opposing lines create motion. Look at the two Actionlines drawn below. Two simple opposing Actionlines, by their very nature, create force and tension (they don't even have to cross). Imagine Brute and Major Villain locked in a titanic struggle far above the Earth – energy glittering wildly about them, the fate of worlds in the balance, their muscles rippling and surging with power, etc. Now, using these Actionlines, draw it!



#14 MOVEMENT AND MOTION



- Look at the figure drawn above. He has motion and movement – not a lot, but still, he is obviously a living, breathing, two-dimensional drawing. Notice his Centerline, only slightly curved, almost parallel with the edge of the page, yet still implying motion. Also notice the gently sweeping line of the arm, not parallel, but also more a part of the Centerline than opposing it. Then, just to give it a little something extra, I thrust the head forward, giving purpose and intent to the movement, and perhaps suggesting a more action-filled movement to come.

Now we have to talk a little about the difficult part of Movement and Motion, the subtleties. Anyone sitting, laying, standing, hanging around, talking, watching TV, etc., is moving and has life and motion, even if it's only breathing. Even comic book characters have to appear to breathe. People aren't wooden statues. They slouch and shift and fidget all of the time, and so should your characters. You can make your characters real and alive by giving them motion, especially subtle motion. Creating subtle motion is just like creating those bold actions, but just tone it down. Instead of broad, sweeping, aggravated, opposing lines of action, draw smaller, straighter, more similar, closer to parallel Actionlines.



- I don't know if all this sounds legitimate, but a lot of these statements help me explain the theory behind what I'm doing. They help me to understand it, and thereby hopefully help you. Illustrations can say a lot, but people can hear them differently, so the more thought that you put into a drawing, the clearer it will be to read, and people's interpretations will be more similar (if that makes sense). Storytelling is the art of comics. This is all part of it, and I take it very seriously.

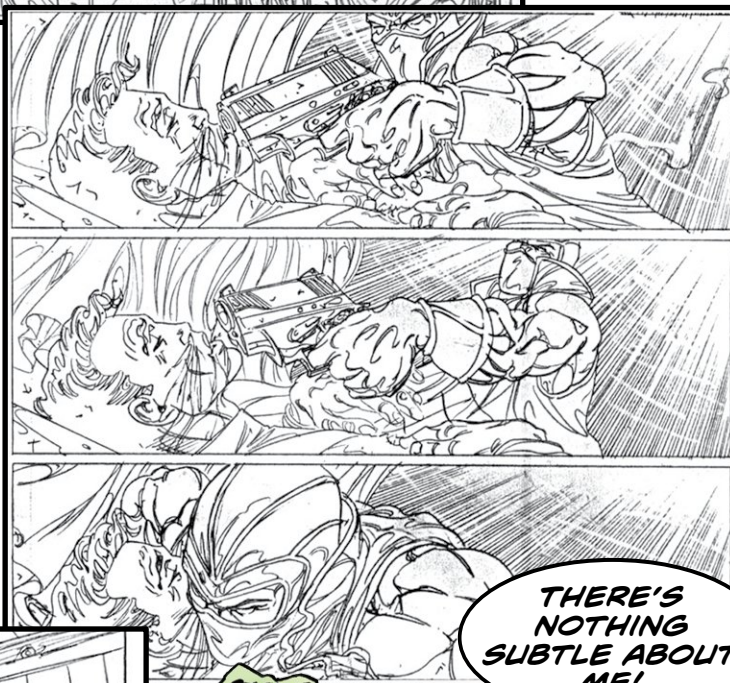
#14 MOVEMENT AND MOTION



The most successful cartoonists, illustrators, and artists study life and the way things move and act, and interpret these things in their art. The action-packed fight scenes are easy to imagine. It's the subtle body movements, when people are hanging out, that you need to teach yourself and spent time learning how to capture. (Note: I just want to say that in drawing powerful comics, nothing is easy. The nature of the work, and the time and effort you need to spend, may take some of the fan-ish fun away from the drawing. But the end result for those who really want to do it and dedicate themselves, is worth all of the effort and sacrifice.)



- Actually there's a lot of subtle in Brute, every drawing of him, probably in every drawing I do. Subtle equals believability. The appearance of weight, not fat, but in how the body reacts to gravity and balances, all very subtle. Expression, how and what people do when they relax, all important to generating believability, no matter your style!



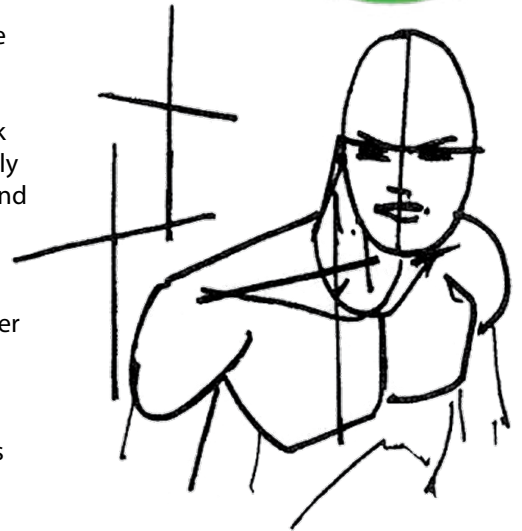
THERE'S
NOTHING
SUBTLE ABOUT
ME!



#14 MOVEMENT AND MOTION



• Note the two drawings to the right, the quick angle line drawing, and the quick figure using those Actiolines. That's the subtle use of opposing Actionlines. Look how just by turning the shoulders slightly (actually in perspective, keep reading) and putting the head on a separate, though parallel Centerline, and by twisting the eye line away from the shoulder line (kind of like twisting the hip and shoulder lines), the figure, though not detailed, almost lives and breathes. Maybe that's something of an exaggeration, but the figure is no longer static or boring. It has Movement and Motion.



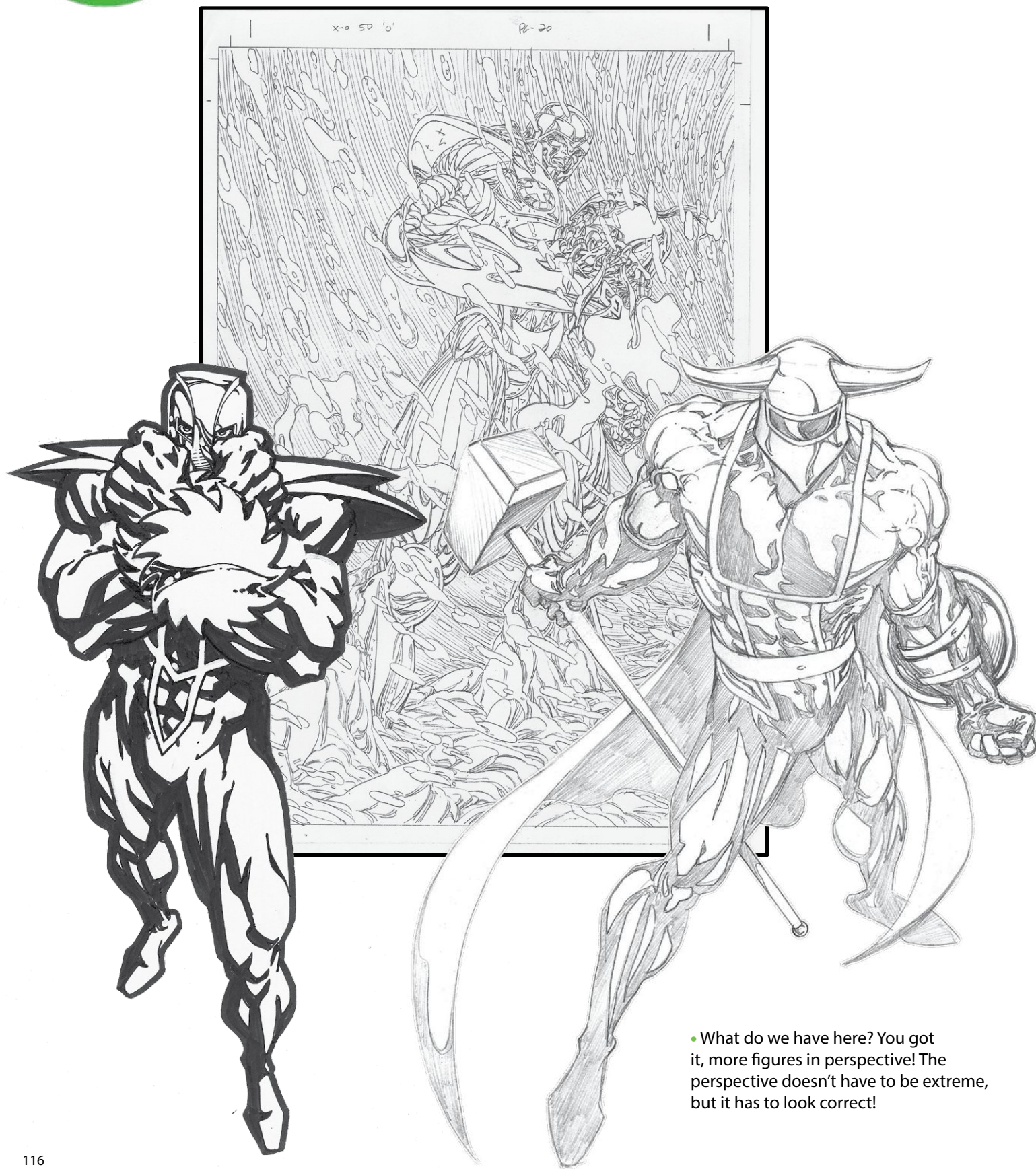
FIGURES IN PERSPECTIVE

• Throwing a figure into perspective, as in the drawing to the lower left, also is a good way to imply movement, as does putting a figure into perspective. These two things are almost the same, but the first deals with creating a perspective for the figure, and foreshortening the figure within it. The drawing to the lower right deals with having a perspective background shot and placing a figure within that. These two concepts are more advanced and each deserve their own article. Hopefully, we'll get to them in the future. For now, be aware and hold your horses.



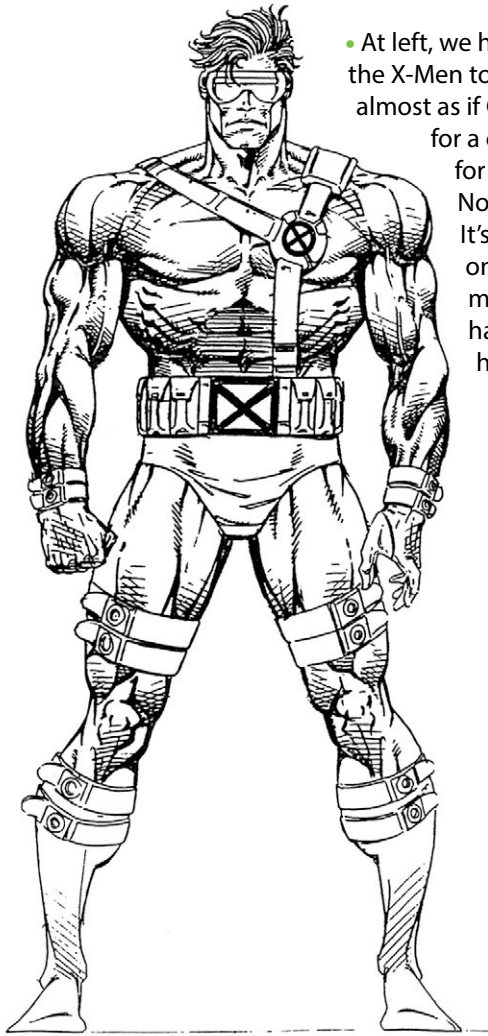


#14 MOVEMENT AND MOTION

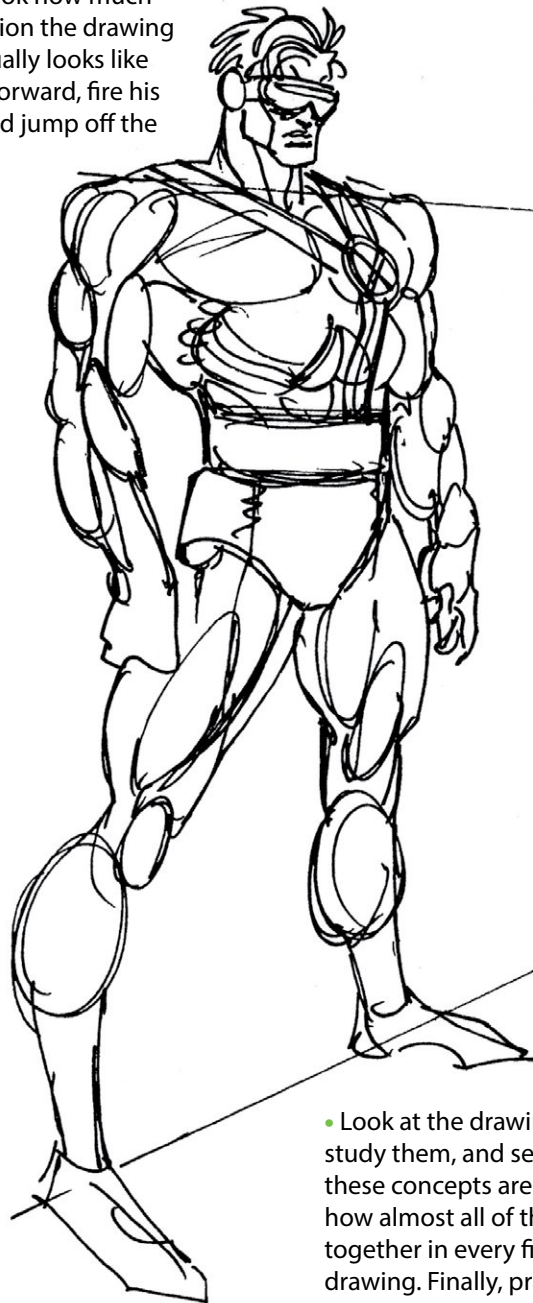


- What do we have here? You got it, more figures in perspective! The perspective doesn't have to be extreme, but it has to look correct!

#14 MOVEMENT AND MOTION



- At left, we have a drawing of Cyclops (one I did for the X-Men toys). Notice how static and still it looks, almost as if Cyclops was asked to stand still and pose for a costume and body type reference shot for a sculpture, which is very stiff for comics. Now look at the drawing at right below. It's not as finished as the drawing on the left, but look how much more life and action the drawing has. Cyclops actually looks like he could strike forward, fire his optic blasts, and jump off the page!



- What we are dealing with here is Depth. The shot of the figure above has very little Depth. (It was designed as part of a sculpture sheet for a toy, and two other different view drawings, side and back, make up the whole drawing and display thickness.) The shot on the right is just loaded with Depth. Notice that both figures are standing the same way and their bodies are in the same position, but see how the figure on the right is drawn from a slight angle and has been drawn in a slight perspective. (Notice the vanishing lines drawn from the feet and shoulders of Cyclops. For fun, find the point of convergence of these lines, the vanishing point, and draw in a horizon line. Note that the vanishing point will be off of the page.) My point is that you can create movement and motion by simply how you place the figure within the panel. If you draw the figure from straight ahead, with no depth to his stance or body, he will appear flat and lifeless.

- Look at the drawings, read and study them, and see how all of these concepts are related and how almost all of them work together in every figure and every drawing. Finally, practice.

It's up to you to practice what you read and see in these pages...
the only way to get better is to draw, and KEEP DRAWING!

#15: BABES #1 - PROPORTION!



BRUTES AND BABES!

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS BY BART SEARS

I OFTEN FIND
MYSELF PERFECTLY
PROPORTIONAL.

If you don't know this already, drawing comics is hard. Perspective, layout, design, storytelling, and the list of what you need to understand and master to draw comics well goes on and on. But, for many, perhaps one of the hardest aspects of drawing comics is drawing women. I know it is for me.

Drawing women might be one of the hardest aspects of drawing anything.

Often the difference between beautiful and unintentionally ugly, or believably real and unsuccessful, is a hair's width in the placement of a line. Drawing women...babes, dames, witches, heroines, goddesses, harpies, mermaids or crones...is tough stuff.

Let's start learning, let's start at the beginning with proportion.

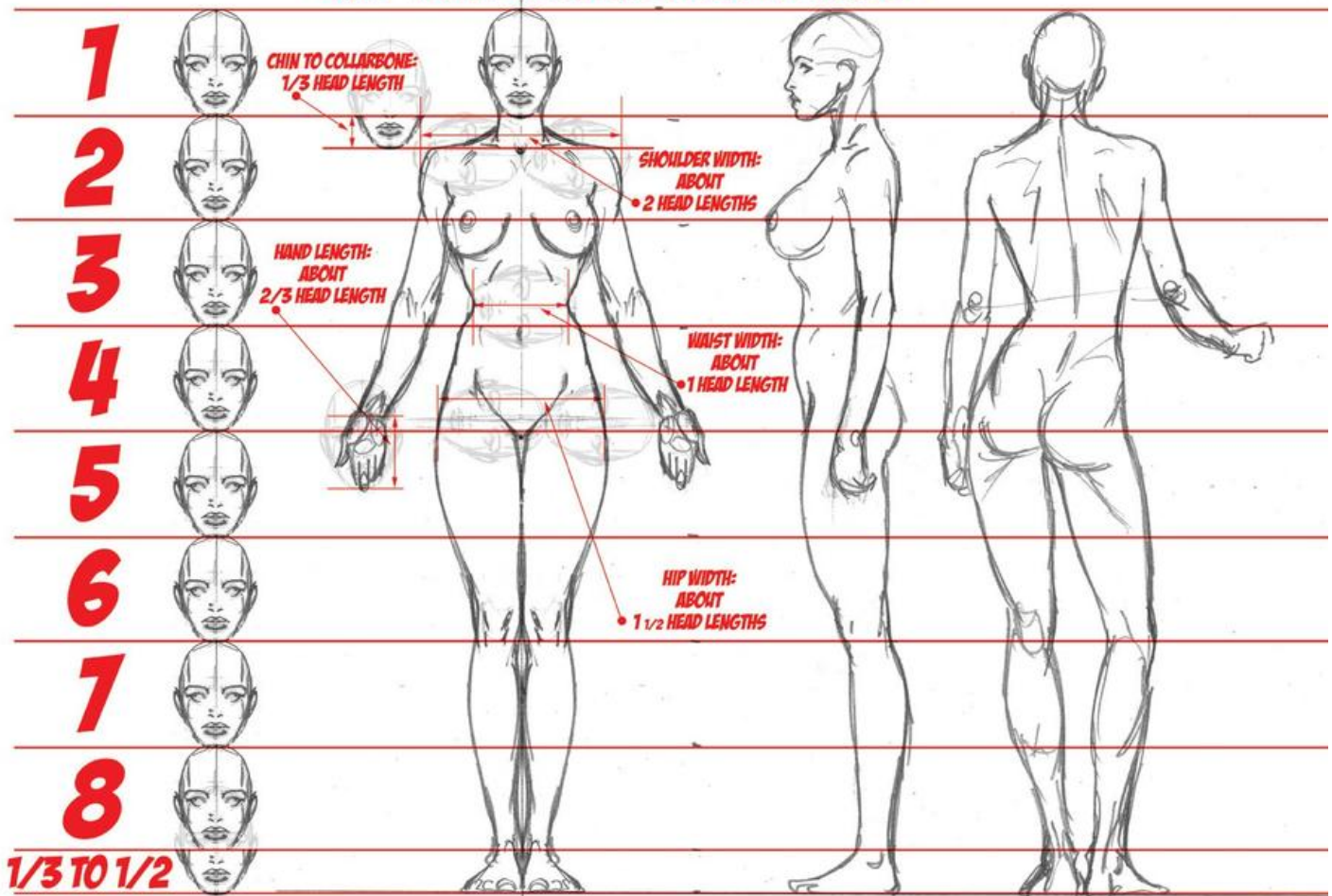


#15: BABES #1 - PROPORTION!



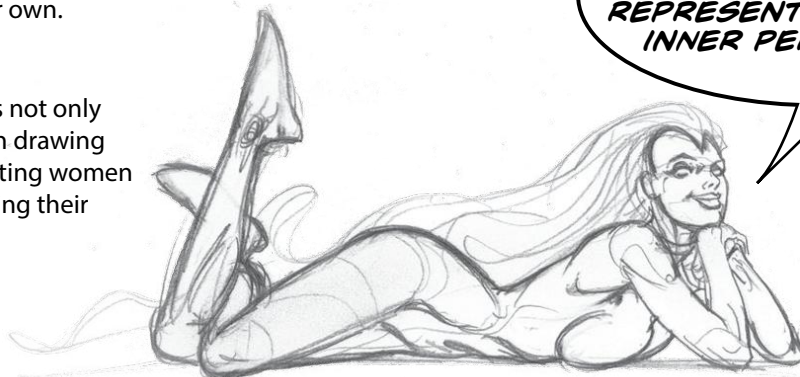
I've found drawing women one of the hardest aspects of drawing comics, or any other form of art for that matter. Pretty women, ugly women, old women, young women, skinny women, fat women, muscular women, sexy women, teenagers... doesn't matter, drawing women is tough. It's a struggle: I've probably failed more than I succeeded, but you have to keep trying.

• MY 'IDEAL' FEMALE PROPORTIONS •



• Female proportion - women come in lots of beautiful and very different shapes and sizes: what's drawn above is my "idealized" female proportion (one of them anyway), this particular one at 8 1/2 - 8 1/3 heads high. Check out the proportion breakdowns listed in red, start measuring and making your own.

• As you can imagine, mastering proportion is not only important in drawing sexy women, but also in drawing women of all shapes and sizes, as well as creating women with unique, distinctive character and capturing their inner personality in a visual manner.



HEY Y'ALL... JUST BASKING IN THE VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF MY INNER PERSONALITY.



#15: BABES #1 - PROPORTION!

Drawn below are four female figures, all of them are the same height (proportion/head height isn't about how tall anyone is), but of wildly different proportions. There is nothing subtle about these proportion variations; they are drawn to clearly illustrate my point.

6 HEADS



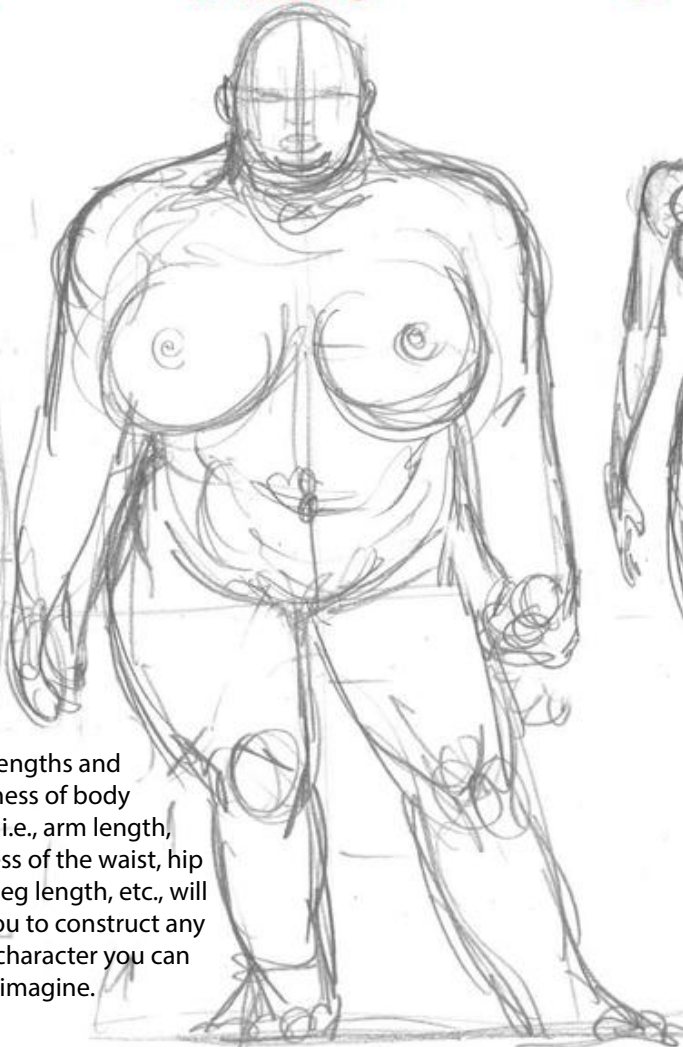
NORMAL

9 1/2 HEADS



SUPER-HEROIC/GOD-LIKE

6 HEADS



BULKY/BRUISER

8 1/2 HEADS



WAF/FAIRY

• The lengths and thickness of body parts, i.e., arm length, thickness of the waist, hip depth, leg length, etc., will allow you to construct any female character you can imagine.

• As you can see, there can be a wide variety of body types with varying head heights, as well as a variety of body types with the same head height. Check out the two six-head figures, very different body types!

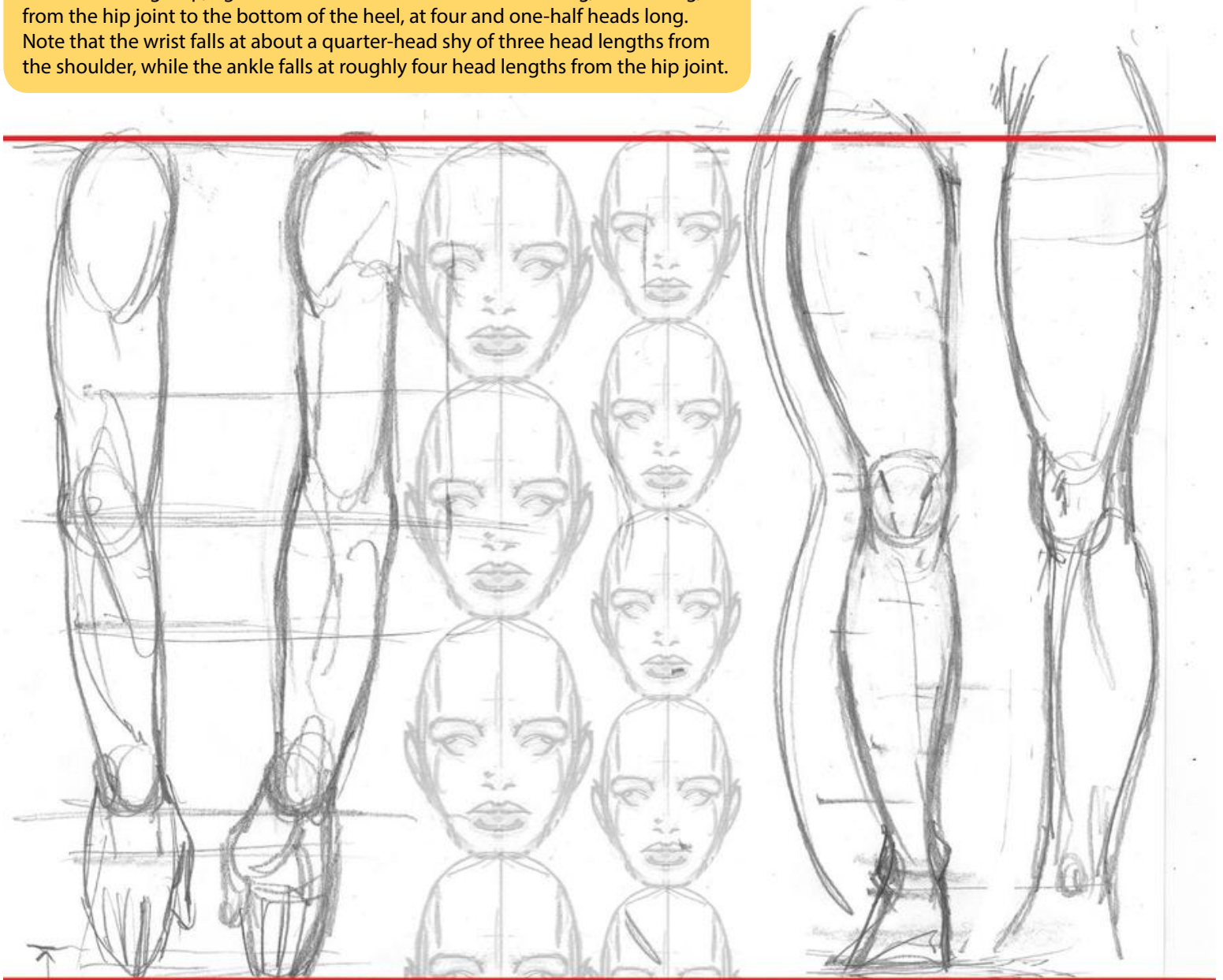
• Measure, compare and contrast the proportions between all of the figures. Notice the liberties taken with the proportions of the third figure; for instance, notice how much lower the hip line sits in relation to the other six-head figure, and the others. The hip line denotes the figure's center of gravity, the lower it is in proportion to the torso, the weightier the figure becomes.

• Notice the variety in width of each head as well. The head width in relation to the head height is a simple, great way to create individuality between characters, as well as helping to make visual the personality of your characters.

#15: BABES #1 - PROPORTION!



ARMS AND LEGS - Let's take a closer look at arm and leg proportion. For our idealized female proportion in this tutorial, we have the arm, from the top of the shoulder to fingertip, right around three and one-half heads long, and the leg, from the hip joint to the bottom of the heel, at four and one-half heads long. Note that the wrist falls at about a quarter-head shy of three head lengths from the shoulder, while the ankle falls at roughly four head lengths from the hip joint.



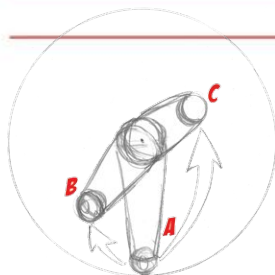
- How many heads wide is the thigh? The elbow? The knee? Note the outside sweep of the leg from the front view, imagine the leg as an elongated "B."

- Arm and leg proportion is relative; what does that mean, right? To succeed in drawing a natural-looking woman, she has to look right. If her arms hang down to her knees, she's not going to look right. If her legs are the same length as her arms, she's not going to look right. We are the masters of proportion. Your ideal female proportion may differ from mine or Pete's or Mary's, but if it looks right, it is.



#15: BABES #1 - PROPORTION!

PROPORTION FROM GESTURE - How do you work proportion in real drawing life? Check out Figure A below, a quick gestural drawing for a pose. This is how most every drawing I do begins, as a simple idea, a quick sketch of motion. The next step is to define proportion. We do that by defining the head size. Then we determine how tall that figure would be, if it was standing straight and flat to the viewer/viewing plane. The line of heads in red defines this figure's maximum height, according to the proportions we've set. From top of head to bottom of heels, this figure cannot exceed that height.* In Figure B, we've measured out proportion. Note the overlap of the red head measures in constructing the torso, as the body moves, bends and twists, the proportions overlap; in motion, the torso can become shorter than your maximum measure, but never longer. Note the head measures for the thighs, the measure starts at the hip joint. Again, the thigh cannot be longer than the measure, and as it moves toward or away from the viewer, it appears shorter. Same as the arm, three heads measured straight give you the maximum distance to the wrist (2 3/4 heads), so an arm moving toward or away has to be less than this measure; see the next section below for more info. Using those measures, I've constructed a Block and Cube style understructure for the figure. In Figure C, I've drawn the bubble muscle figures over the Block and Cube understructure, and in D we have the final finished pencil Babe figure.



- This illustration defines the Zone Of Movement for any limb; upper arm, lower arm, upper leg and lower leg – also works for the whole limb in general. A shows the limb in question at its longest position and the circle illustrates that distance around its joint. B and C show that same limb as it starts to move around its joint, moving toward or away from us. Note that the limb shortens in every position other than flat to the viewer.

That wraps up this chapter. So much info to get out and never seems like enough space! Until the next one... Keep Drawing!

#16: BABES #2 - ANATOMY PART 1



BRUTES AND BABES!

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS BY BART SEARS

All right, so we've had a bit of a look at female proportion. Now let's take a gander at female anatomy, specifically the anatomy of the upper torso.

I've always been amazed when I write one of these tutorials to discover how much I've forgotten, or just plain don't know and maybe never did. The business of drawing comics is quite different than the journey of learning to draw comics. Over time, much of the particular information and detail you must learn to understand what you are doing becomes, I don't know, homogenized within your ability and daily/hourly task of doing it, i.e., drawing.

I think my point is this: in writing these tutorials, and teaching in general, I find myself digging waaaay down deep and, in some cases, re-teaching myself some of the basic principles of drawing so I can adequately explain what the hey I'm trying to teach.

At least I hope I adequately explain it...

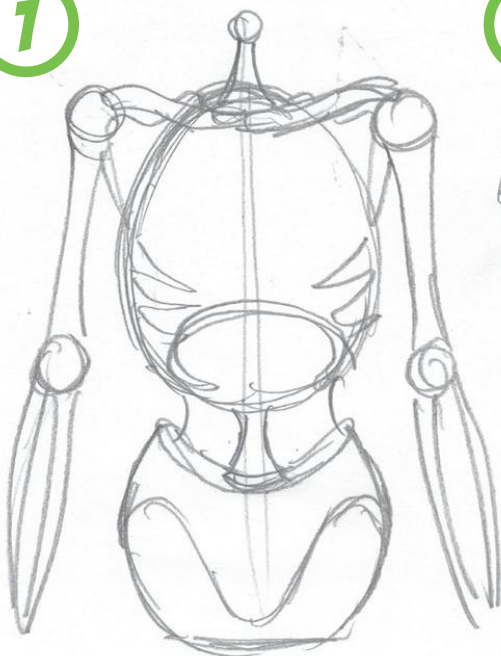
ANATOMICALLY
SPEAKING, I'VE GOT
THE GOODS.



#16: BABES #2 - ANATOMY PART 1

THE SKELETON - The sharper amongst you may have noticed this sub-section is labeled "The Skeleton" and may have also noticed that I didn't draw a skeleton anywhere on this page. I've found that unless I was actually drawing a skeleton, skull, zombie or some such, I've not had much need for one...a realistic-looking one, anyway... so what I've drawn here is a representative skeleton. It's basically a simple, structurally-accurate representation of a real skeleton, with all the needed shapes and movement, without all the boring (yet cool) bone detail, and is perfect for learning from and drawing with.

1

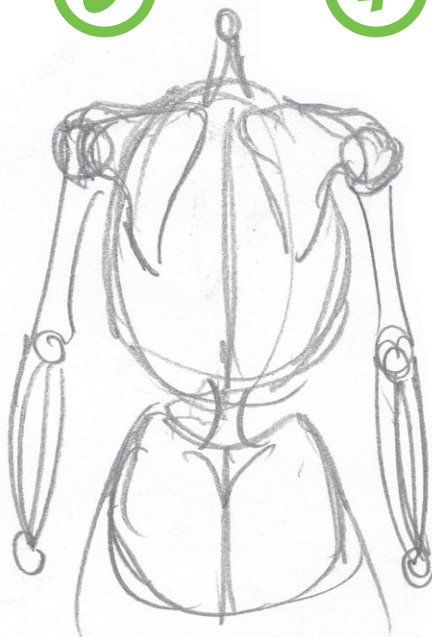


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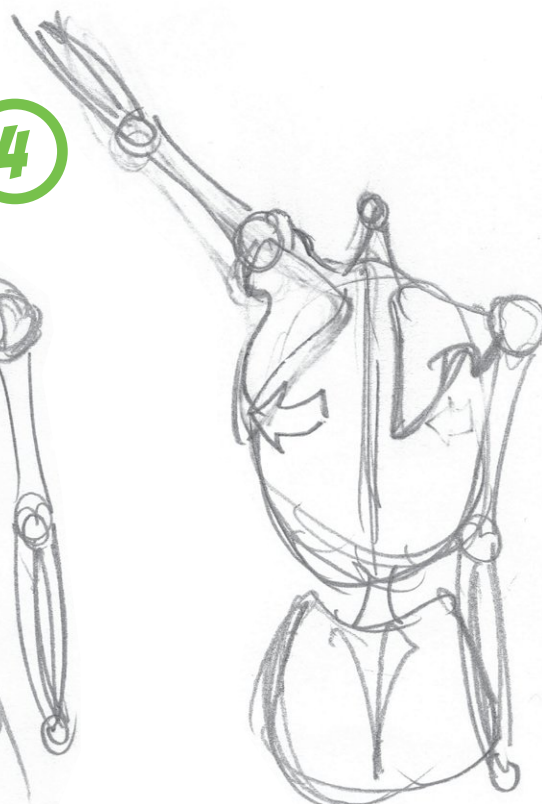


- Figure #1 is the female skeletal torso. Could it also be a male skeletal torso? Sure, but maybe the hips would be a bit different, maybe not. Proportionally it stays true to whatever female proportion you are working with, and is comprised of a simple egg-type shape to represent the rib cage, circles/balls to represent the joints, and a more involved shape to represent the pelvis (though much simpler than the actual skeletal pelvis). Figure #2 turns that shape for a $\frac{3}{4}$ back view, with one arm slightly raised, just to get it out of the way.

3



4



- In Figure #3 we have a simple back skeletal torso. Note how the front view and $\frac{3}{4}$ back view translate, also notice the distinctive shape of the shoulder blades – these are important bones to understand when drawing. In Figure #4, you can see why: one arm is raised, please note how the shoulder blade follows the upper arm's motion. If you look closely, you'll see the other arm is pulled back and in toward the torso. Please note how that scrunches the shoulder blade in to the center of the back. Important movement!

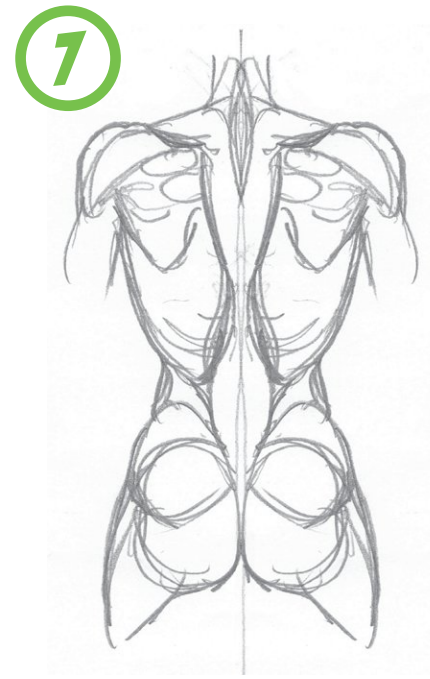
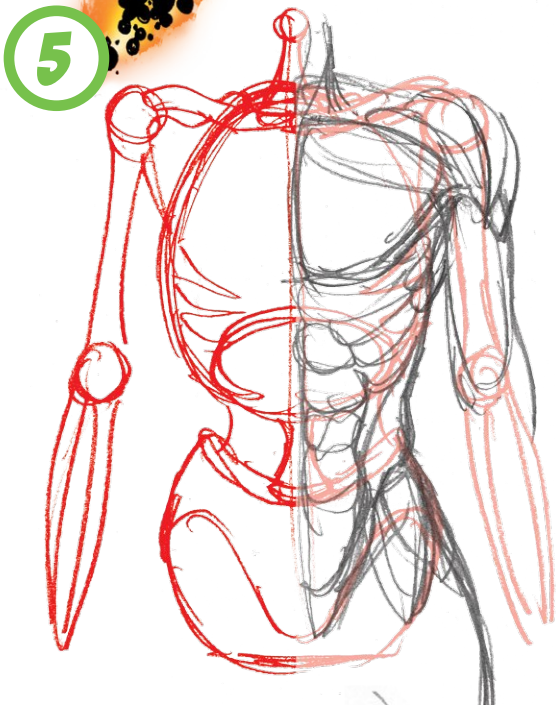


#16: BABES #2 - ANATOMY PART 1



MUSCLES PULL
IT ALL TOGETHER...
KINDA.

THE MUSCLE - Let's take a look at the bubble muscle construction over the skeleton/understructure. In Figure #5; note that the chest and shoulder muscles attach at the clavicle. See how far down the rib cage the chest muscle attaches? Note where the rib muscles attach and how the stomach muscles fit within the rib cage and overlap the pelvis. Check out Figures #6 and #7, please take note that none of the bubble muscles cut into the understructure, but lay on top of it.

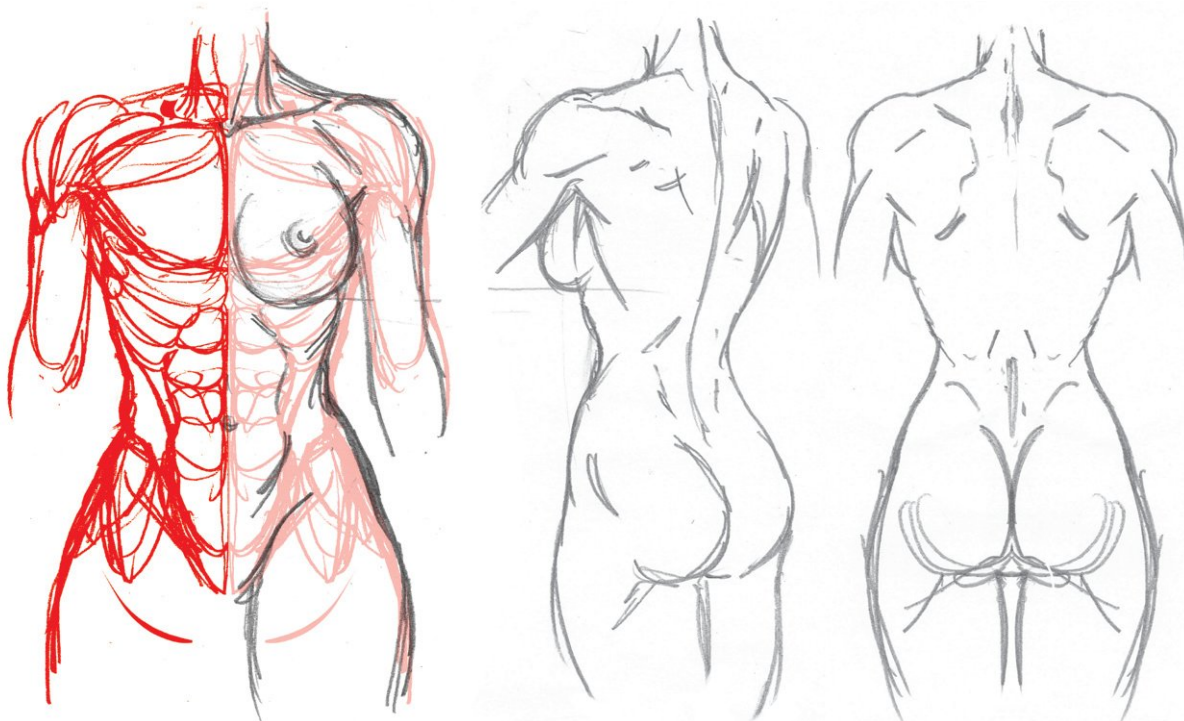


- Muscles work together. They move and flex in response to the body's movements. The muscles aren't solid lumps, but flexible, pliable masses. Illustrated in Figure #8, we see how the muscles of the back respond to the movements of the arm, and the attached shoulder blade. On the left side, where the arm is raised, the muscles expand. Whereas on the right, where the arm is back and in, the muscles bunch up, contracting and compressing.

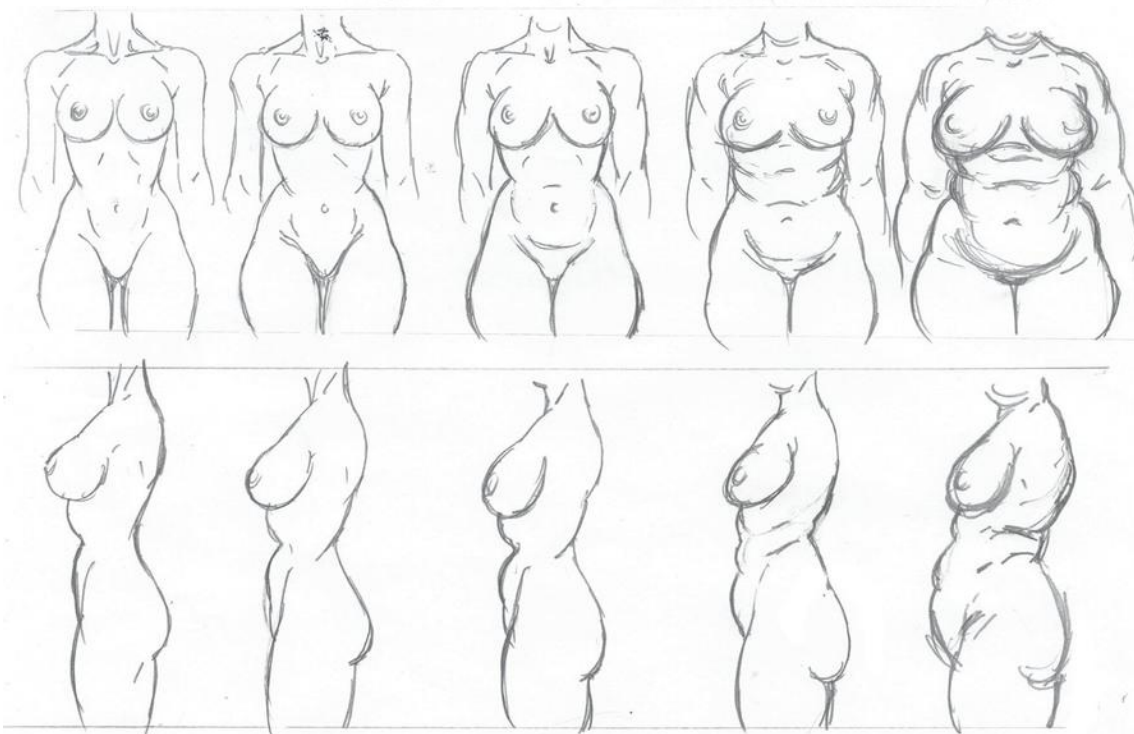


#16: BABES #2 - ANATOMY PART 1

THE FLESH - Ah, the flesh! The bestest part. Drawing the flesh is where the drawing all comes together. In general, drawing women requires using less line work and rendering, as more lines within the feminine figure make her appear harder, more chiseled and more generically male. Also, more lines on females also add age. Are these hard and fast rules? No. But it is a good place to start. In this figure, please note how we interpret the bubble muscles below into the rendering/line work for the flesh. Again, simple line work and define minimal detail. Keeps the form smooth and supple, while still exuding strength.



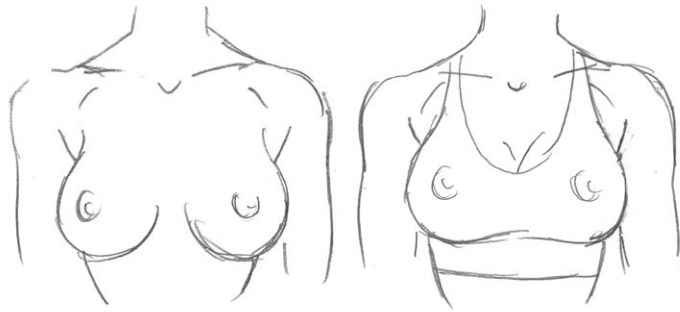
- Adding flesh to the female torso isn't as easy as it looks. As fat is added to the female body (or male body), gravity starts to really affect the flesh. As weight is added, note how the breasts drop, flatten and start to sag to the side; how the belly and even the opening of fat over the belly button drops, how the butt starts to droop. Note how the flesh starts to stack on the sides, and roll in the front. I think it's all pretty interesting.





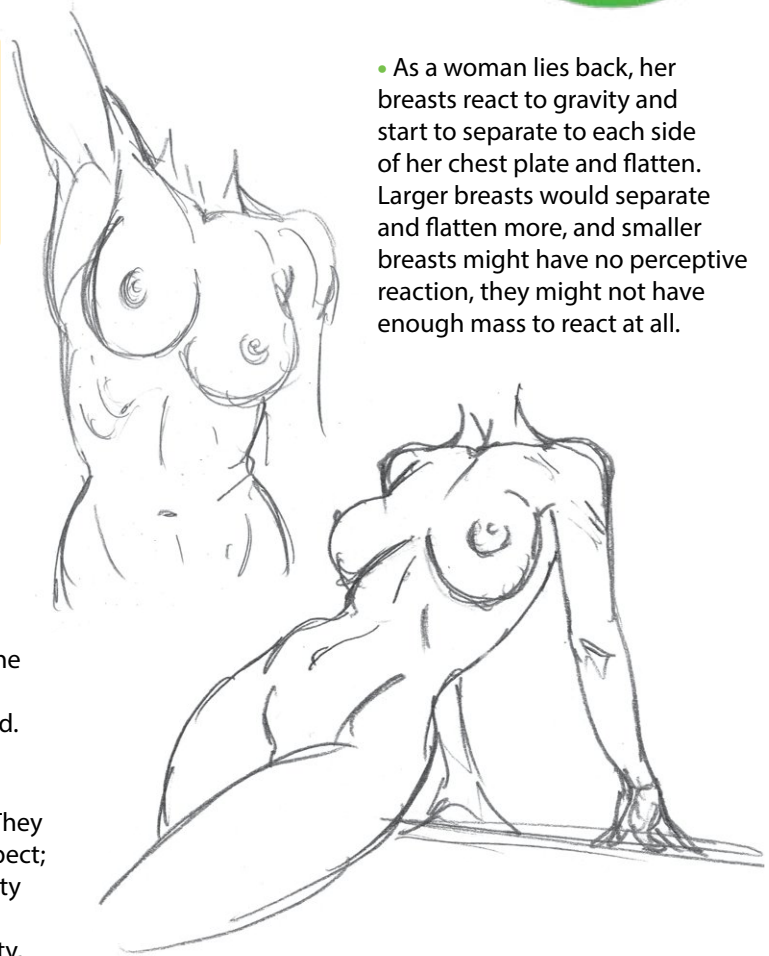
#16: BABES #2 - ANATOMY PART 1

THE BREAST - A very important aspect of the female torso is the breast(s). You might find it uncomfortable to talk about, but if you want to draw comics, you have to draw figures, and breasts (and the nipple) are a necessary part of the art. The figure below illustrates how average, idealized breasts rest when naked, and how cleavage is formed when the breasts are confined, either by a bra, or some other supportive or elastic material.

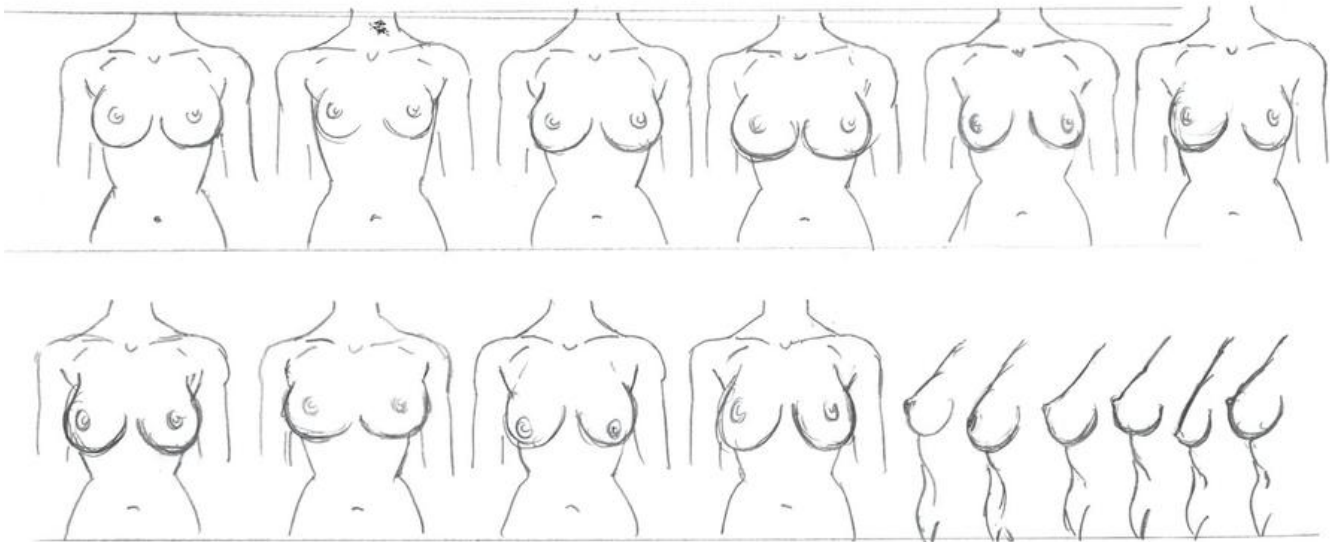


- Breasts are not hard lumps, but are soft and pliable, and react to the movement of the body as well as gravity. The illustration above and to the right details how the breast is pulled up when an arm is raised.

- Breasts appear in all manner of shapes and size, no two are alike! They are as important a part of any character you design as any other aspect; proportion, hair style, facial features, musculature, etc. A small variety of breasts are illustrated here; none of them are wrong or right, just different. Please note how larger breasts are more affected by gravity, although the firmness of the breast tissue would have an effect as well.



- As a woman lies back, her breasts react to gravity and start to separate to each side of her chest plate and flatten. Larger breasts would separate and flatten more, and smaller breasts might have no perceptible reaction, they might not have enough mass to react at all.



Next we take a look at the lower half of the female anatomy, and arms too!

#17: BABES #3 - ANATOMY PART 2



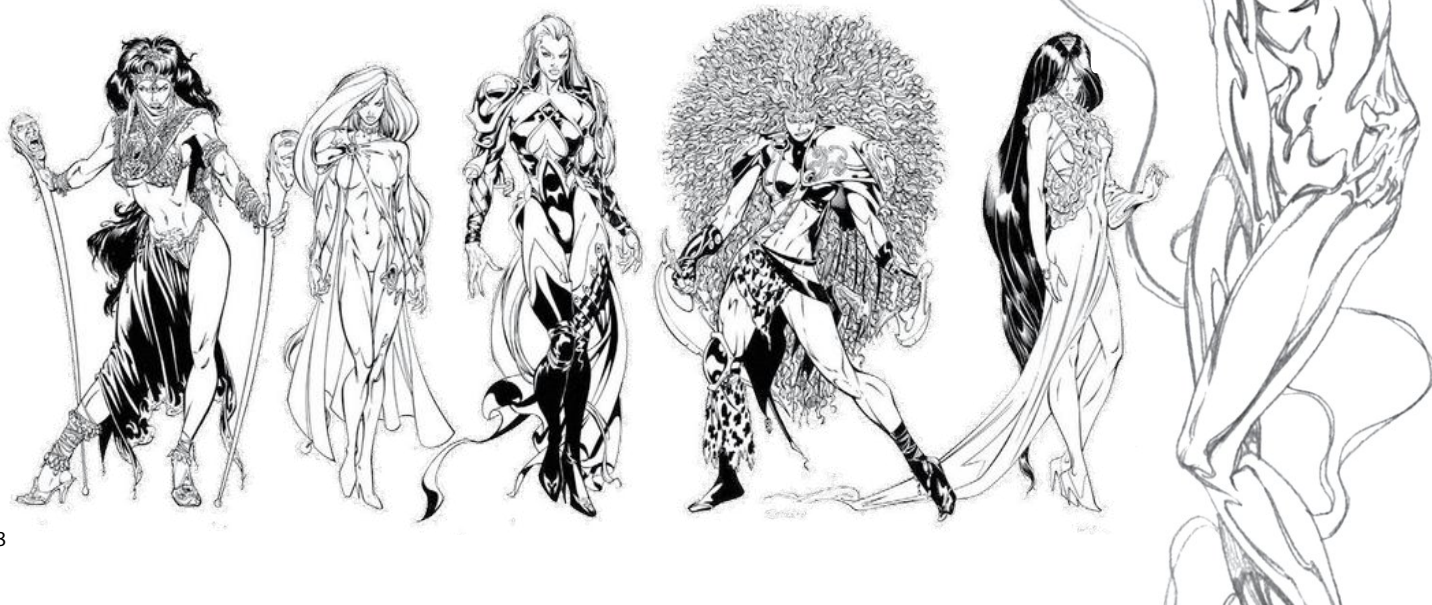
BRUTES AND BABES!

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS BY BART SEARS

LOOK AT MY
PERFECT...ARM AND
LEG ANATOMY.

Time to look at the limbs; we know them as female arms and legs. We aren't gonna stop there, though, we are also going to put it all together. Yeah, we're gonna draw a figure!

Below is a lineup of differently proportioned female figures.





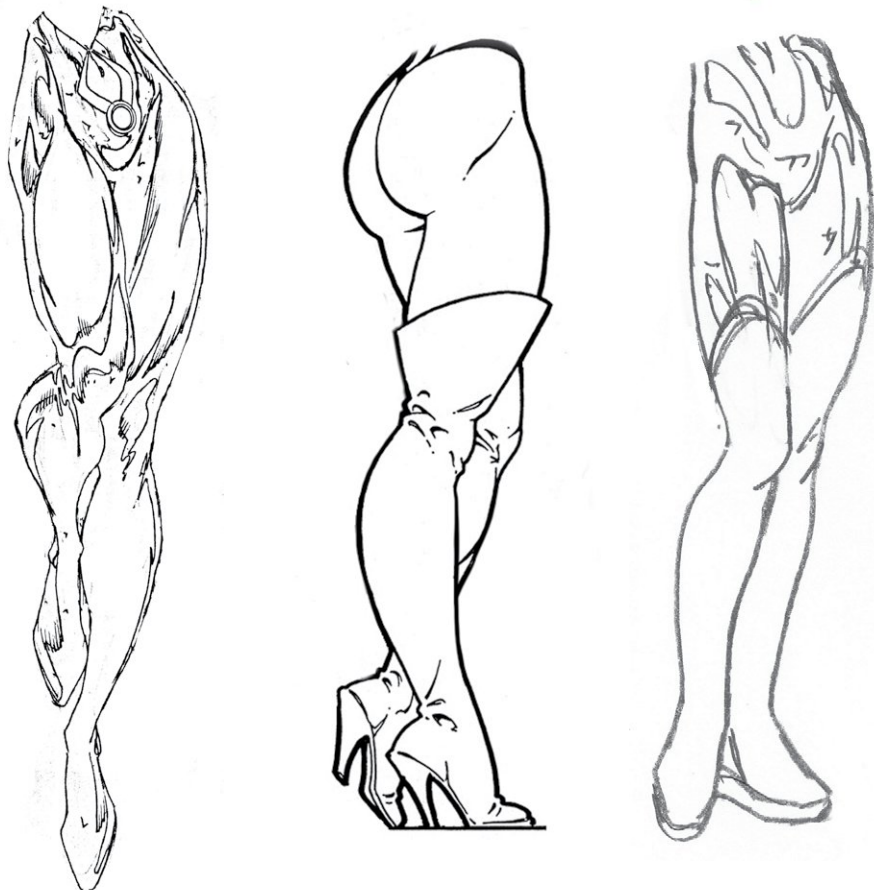
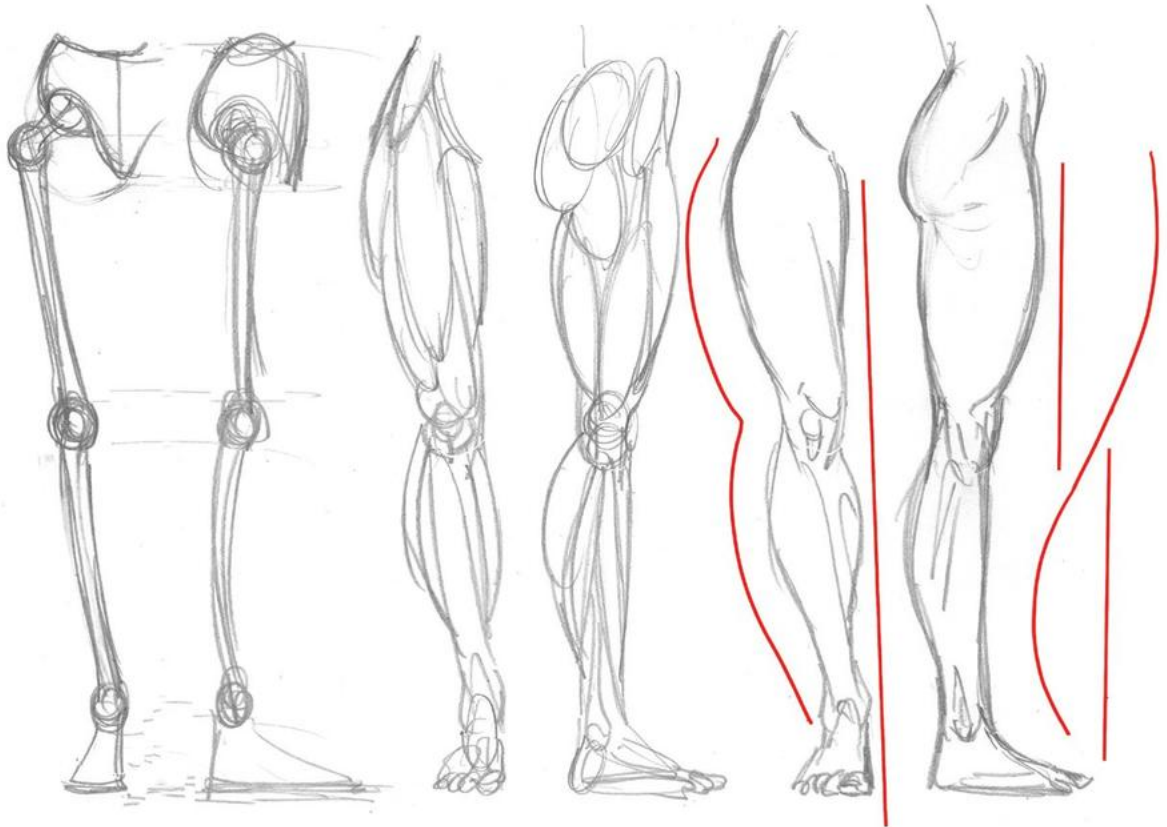
#17: BABES #3 - ANATOMY PART 2

LEGS - The title says it all. Maybe my work here is done?

Lucky for you all I'm pretty much a babbler... well, maybe not so lucky. I've drawn a skeletal form of the female leg, with a bubble muscle image and a final, loosely rendered front and side view of the leg (rendered without any finishing style). Note the red lines that illustrate the sweep of the front view – almost makes a “B” shape, and the almost-corkscrew sweep of the side view – simple but effective imagery to keep in mind.

You may ask, “Hey Bart, why didn’t you draw the leg understructure? You go on and on about understructure...” I daresay in that instance, I would answer, most eloquently, “Because I want you to do it,” and follow that up with “I have drawn it many times in this very book, now it is your turn.”

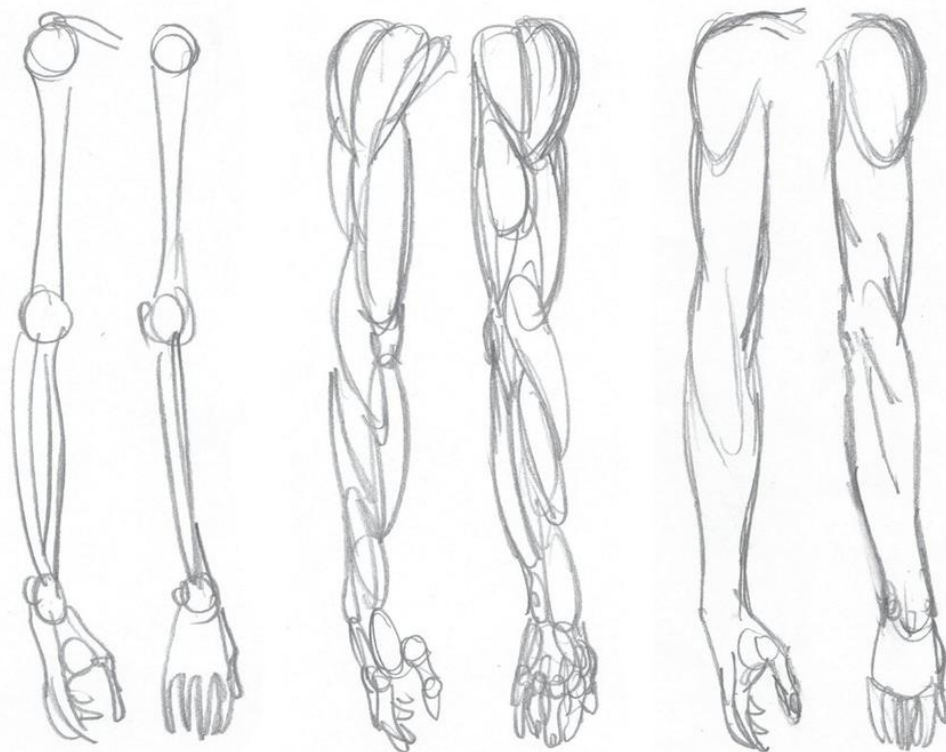
So start drawing.



- Here are three images pulled from comic pages that show some female legs. Notice how even bent the sweep of the legs – front and side view – still manifests? Good stuff!



#17: BABES #3 - ANATOMY PART 2

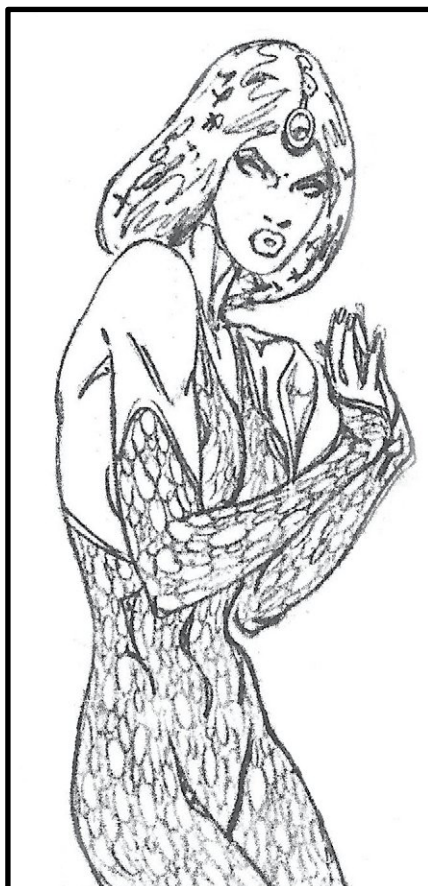


ARMS - I did the same thing here with the female arm as I just did with the leg. Simple skeletal-ish structure, bubble musculature and unrefined finish. Remember, with women, old or young, even though the muscle is there, it doesn't mean it has to be defined in your final render/pencil. Like with any character, muscular development and definition will depend on the particular character you are drawing.

There is quite a bit of comparative anatomy between arms and legs. Check them out, compare and see if you can figure it out. A hint: check out how the joints move. Note: same sweeps apply, just not as pronounced...



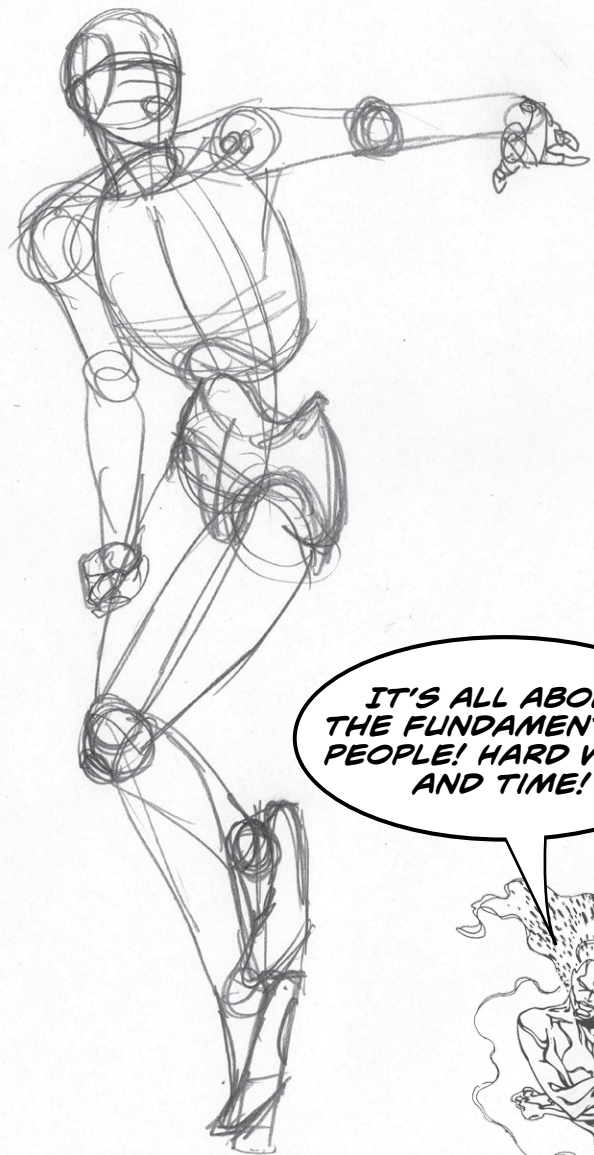
- Look at the arms pictured here. Harder to separate them out from the torso than the legs, and still make sense, so I didn't.



#17: BABES #3 - ANATOMY PART 2



- **PUT IT ALL TOGETHER!** - Above is the gesture drawing for a warrior of the female persuasion. This is generally how any drawing starts... simple, loose flowing lines that create motion and mass, illustrating an idea percolating in your noggin.



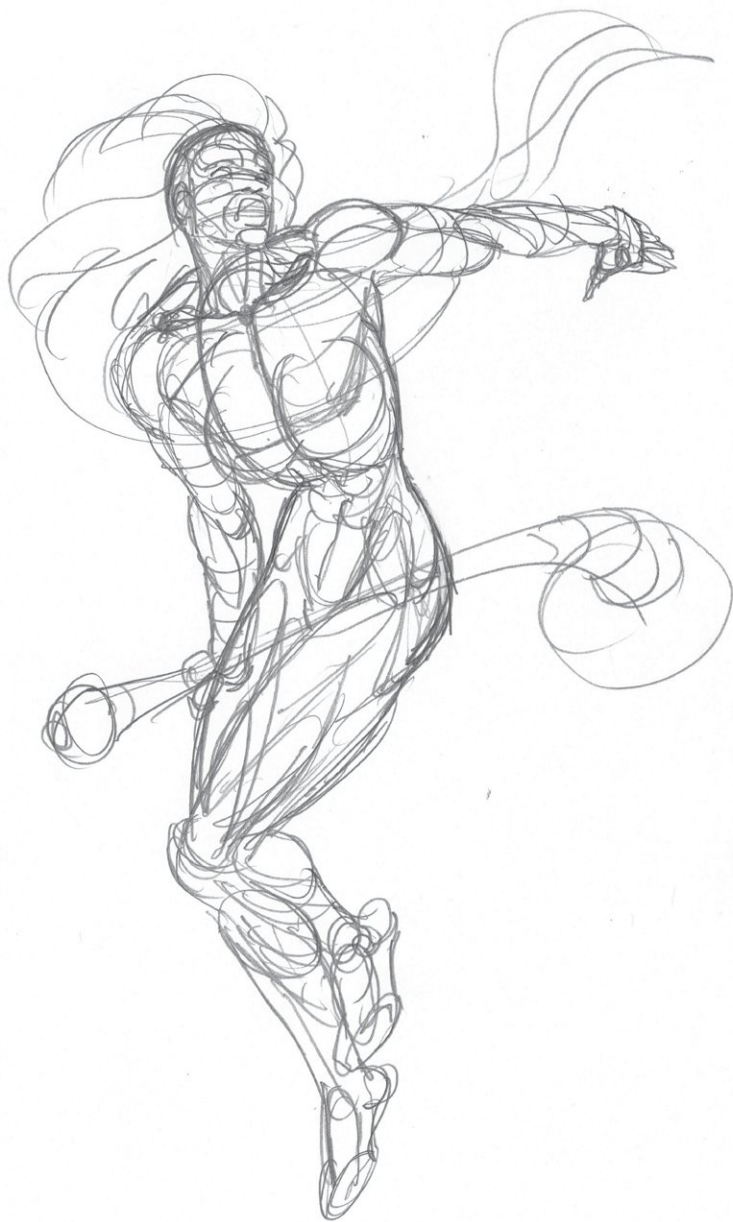
IT'S ALL ABOUT
THE FUNDAMENTALS,
PEOPLE! HARD WORK
AND TIME!

- **UNDER CONSTRUCTION!** - Yeah, I'm a geek. Above is a simple Bart-style Block and Cube construction. Note how the shoulders move up and down on the rib cage – forward and back too, not much, but they do! Quick question for you: if this character stood up straight, how many heads tall would she be?

Note: The only thing you get for the correct answer is waaaay better drawing skills!



#17: BABES #3 - ANATOMY PART 2



• It's time for bubble muscles, one of my favorite times of the day. Note the overlap of her upper torso as her body bends forward at the waist, and the foreshortening of her stomach muscles. Study the overlap of the muscles on her left arm as it recedes, and how the forearm muscles follow the twist of her wrist.

Here she is, all rendered up with style! Had to cover up a lot of the body that I worked so hard drawing with armor and boots and junk, but well worth it. Knowing the understructure so well allows for realistically drawing elements on and interacting with the body.

Now it's your turn! And time to move on!

#18: BABES #4 - FACES



BRUTES AND BABES!

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS BY BART SEARS

Faces... heads... women. All difficult stuff to draw. When drawing women's faces, not only do they usually have to be attractive and emotional and expressive, they have to be *different*! Different structure, different race, different noses different eyes, different lips... can drive a man to think!

Look at the face lineup below; take a good look. All attractive faces, all different, in subtle ways and ways that aren't so subtle.

I BROKE
THE MOLD WITH MY
FACE. I WAS PRETTY
PROUD OF THAT...



IGNORE
BRUTE...
PLEASE.



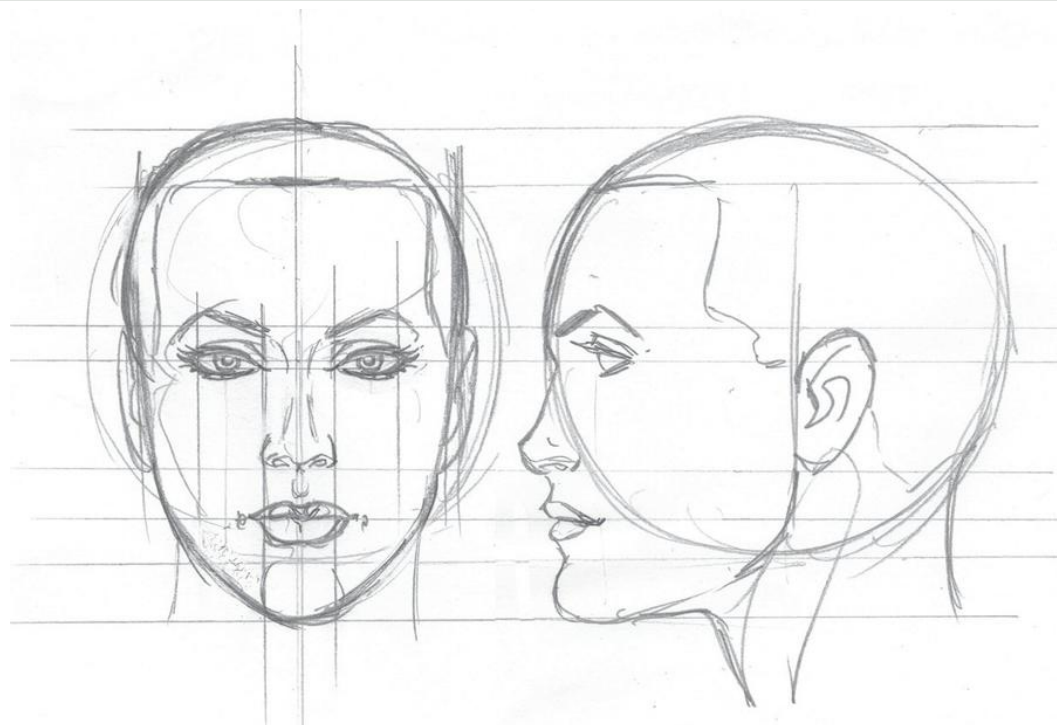


#18: BABES #4 - FACES

Head Construction -

Constructing the female head looks pretty simple, right? If you've tried to draw one before, and I'm pretty sure you have, it's no walk in the park. Classic head construction tells us to start with a circle... see it? Divide it in half and get the brow line... see? All decent how-to-draw books have all this same information. I think it will mean more and stick better if you determine the measurements yourself. Why? Because I feel you'll learn more by dissection, rather than having all the answers laid out before you.

My philosophy with *Brutes and Babes* has always been more about the Why we make the drawing decisions we do, the reasoning and thought processes, and less about the How To of it. We need both, but lots of How To out there, very little Why.



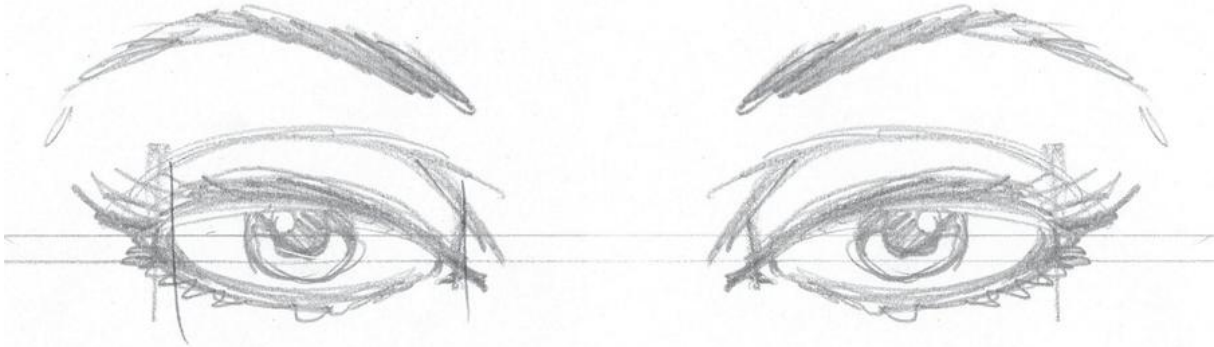
- So what's the Why about constructing a female head? What I've drawn here is a basic female head, using basic proportion and classic construction. If I draw this lesson tomorrow, the head will look a little different, why? Because I won't be drawing this head, or referencing this head, I'll be drawing a new head; my measures will be slightly different, probably draw her eyes a little different, maybe slightly smaller. Maybe her nose won't ski slope so sharply. What's my point? Proportion rules aren't hard and fast, set in stone, there's room for deviation, planned and unplanned. Beauty isn't defined in one way, two ways, or a dozen ways; neither is ugly.

The one thing that doesn't ever change is basic construction – how you construct the head shape, how you build an eye or a nose, a mouth. Proportion changes often, always and should; never construction.



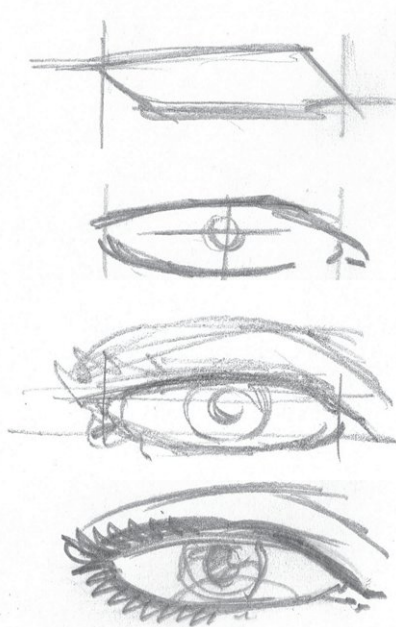
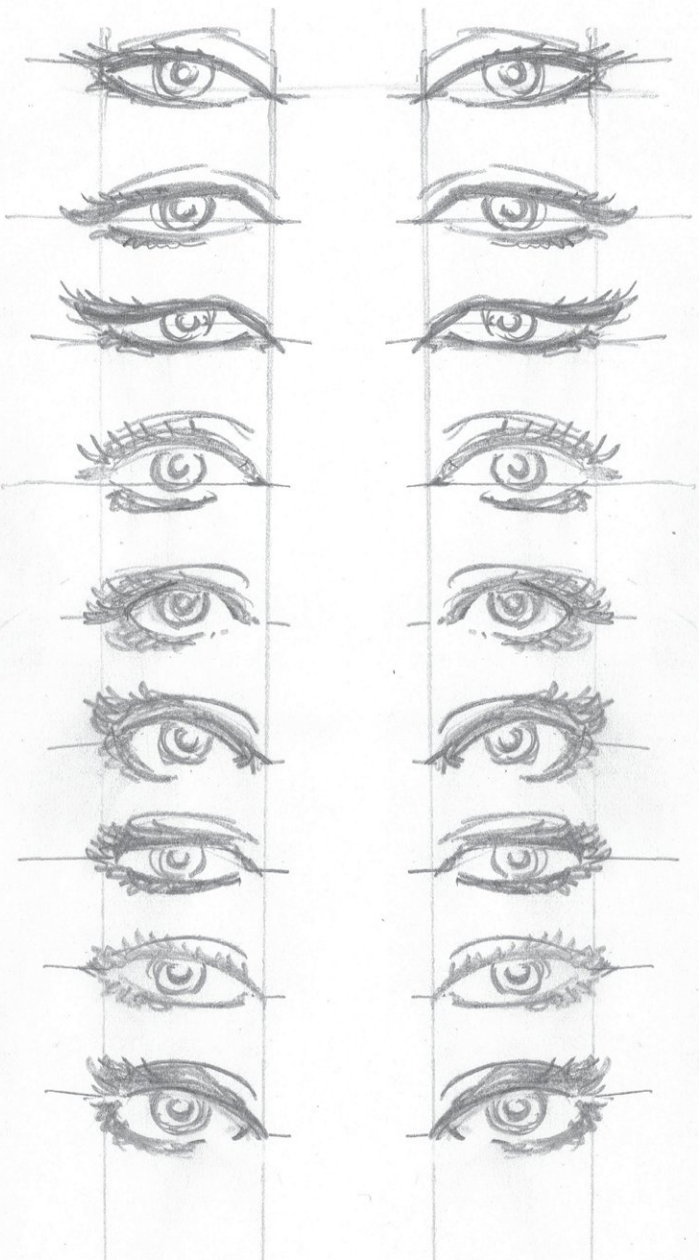
- The series of heads above show different angles of the same female character. The second image illustrates those same heads with basic construction drawn over them. Take a gander.

#18: BABES #4 - FACES



EYES - I have heard said somewhere that the eyes are the mirror to the soul. Okay, I'll grant that they can and should be quite unique to each character you draw/create. Above are a relatively normal set of attractive female eyes, drawn with no particular rendering style.

To the left is drawn a series of different eyes. Notice how the sloping of the eyes can vary, how the roundness can vary, the angles can be hard, the lashes clumped or separate, heavy or thin. And that is without varying the width of the eyes at all. Limitless combinations!

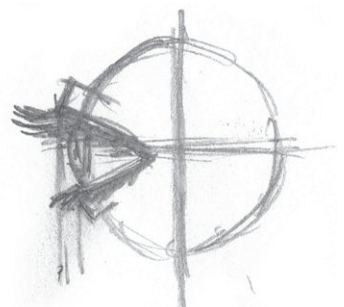


- Here is a quick step-by-step tutorial of how to construct an eye, from simple shape to final render.

Note: you must learn the rules of general proportion and master them before you become adept at changing them in a believable manner! Draw, draw it again and again, and repeat!

General Rule: the top eyelid is drawn heavier than the bottom eyelid... always!

- Quick sketch of the side construction of the eye. Note: the pupil isn't part of the ball of the eye, it's a rounded bump that sits upon it, and the eyelids are flesh that sits on top of the eye. Top and bottom lids have mass and depth.

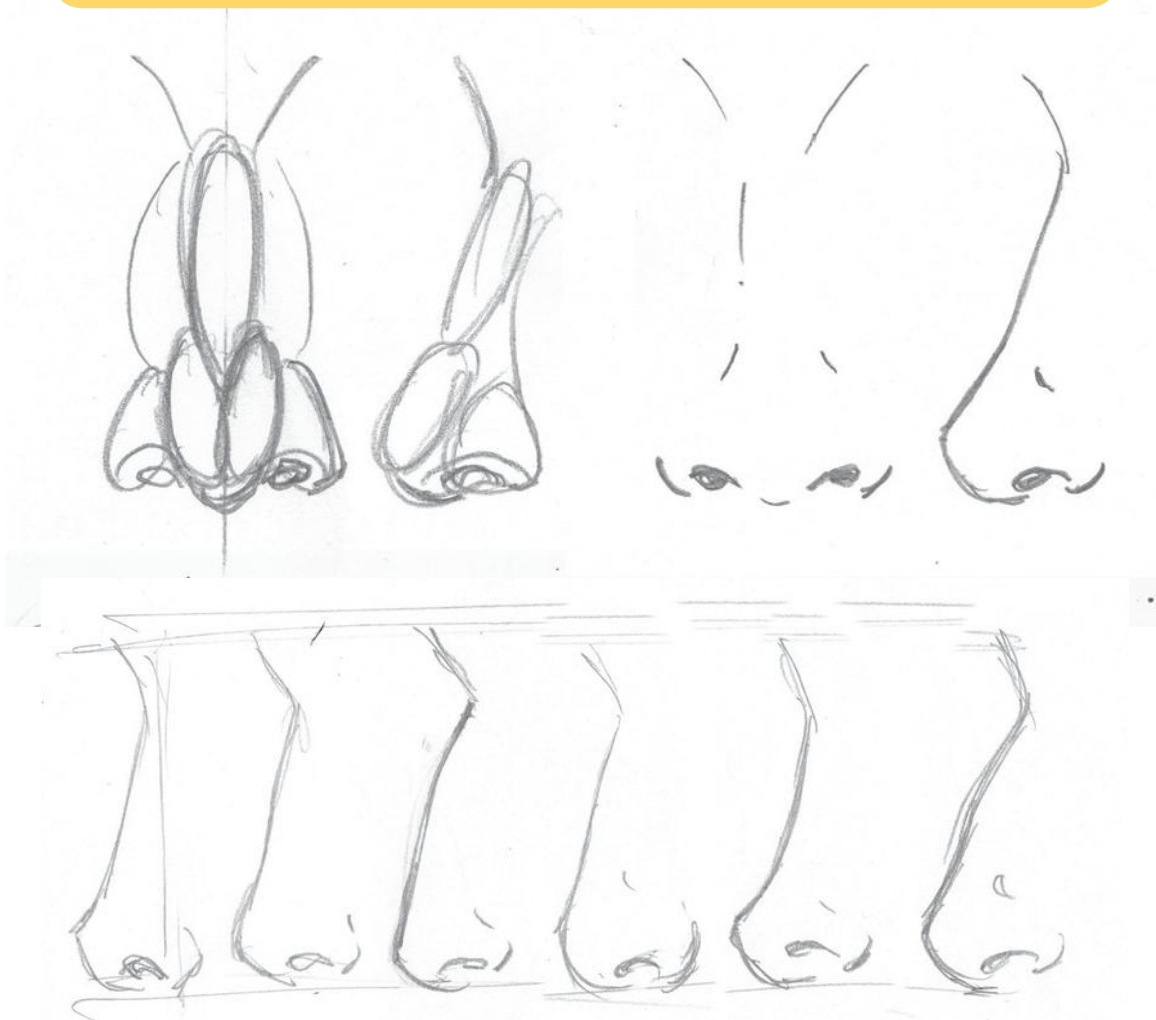




#18: BABES #4 - FACES

NOSES - Below we see basic front and side nose construction, and next to that a simplified form of rendering the female nose. As usual with drawing a female, the less line/line work, the better. Lines add age to any face, more so to the female face. Study the angles of the nose, the uptilt of the tip, the depth of the hood of the nostrils.

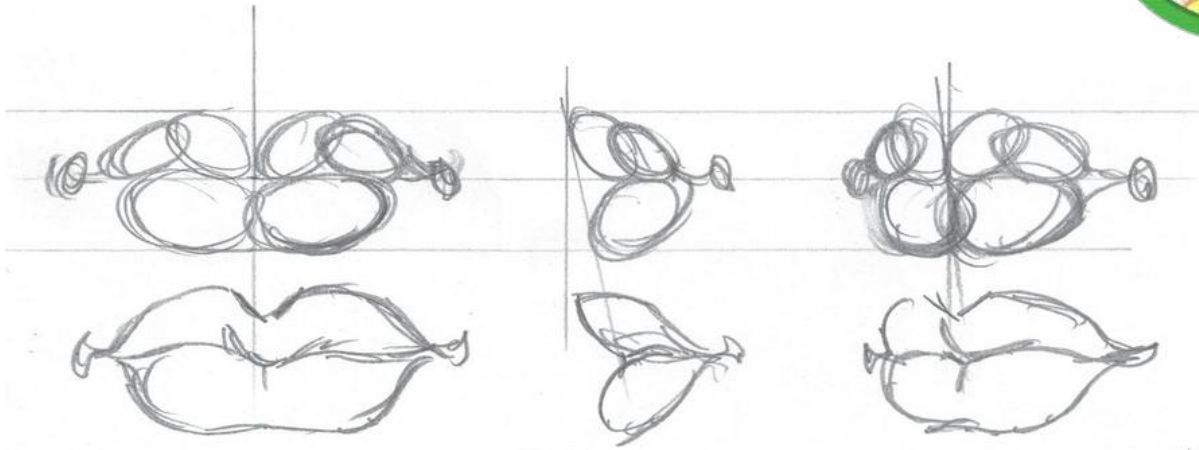
Next we have a series of different female nose profiles. And yes, almost any of these noses could work on a male, though in general the male nose is larger and protrudes more, with more defined planes. Each of these noses can be further altered by changing the direction or size of the nostril, and shape of the hood of the nostril.



- Check out the drawing to the right. Notice how the bridge of the nose overlaps the far eye. Nine times of ten, the problem I notice with drawn faces at any angle is no overlap. The eyes are set back from the nose and the brow; look at the next person you see and check out these overlaps. Correctly structured overlap will improve your drawing tenfold!

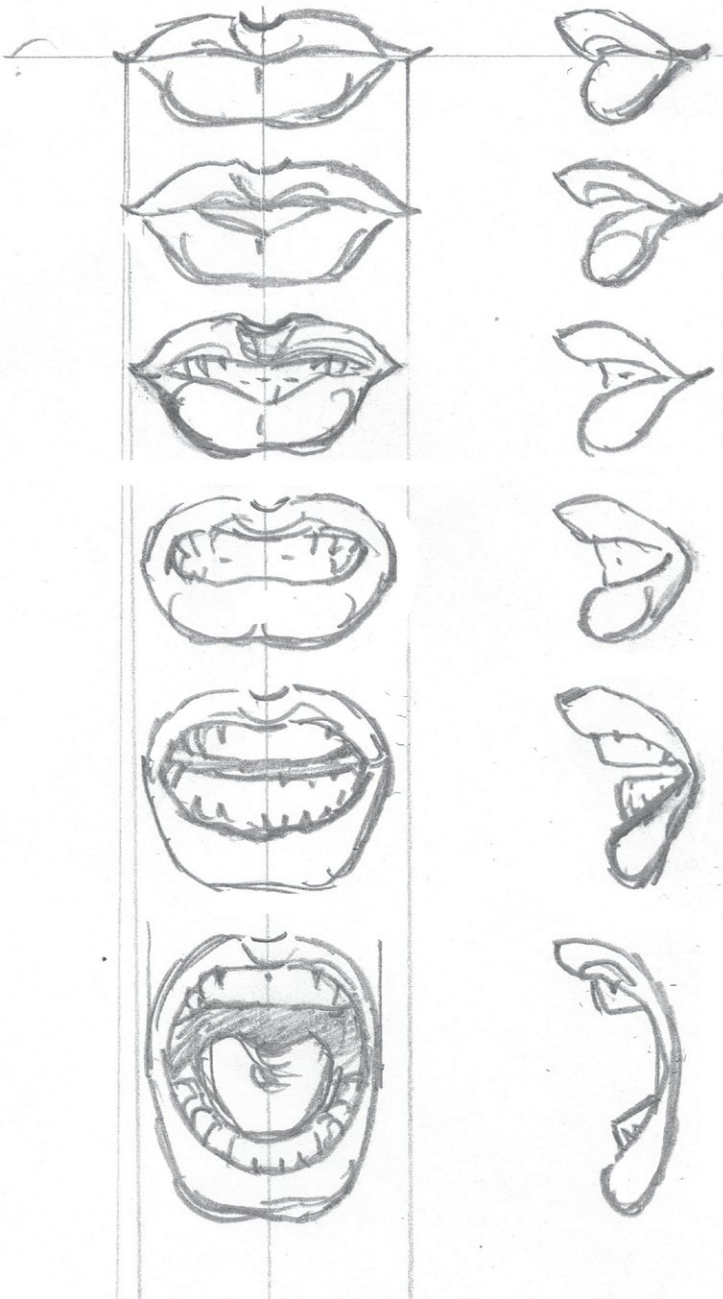


#18: BABES #4 - FACES



LIPS - Soft and fleshy! If you remember only one thing when drawing female lips it's this: female lips are soft and fleshy. Above we have an example of lip structure. Notice how the lips are constructed with a series of bubble muscle-type shapes. Soft and fleshy! Lips can vary as much as any other detail of the human body, from bulbous to streamlined, and everywhere in between.

To the left, a series of drawings showing the lips from closed to full yell, both from the front and side. Notice how the lips thin out the more the mouth opens. What do you think happens as the lips purse?



A haunting tale of revenge.

- Above is Maiden, with the whole face in motion. Very distinctive features, notice the nose, one eye closed more than the other, both brows angry, one slightly raised, the lips in motion in a snarl. And blood.

Next: a little fireside chat about character!

#19: BABES #5 - CHARACTERS!



BRUTES AND BABES!

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS BY BART SEARS

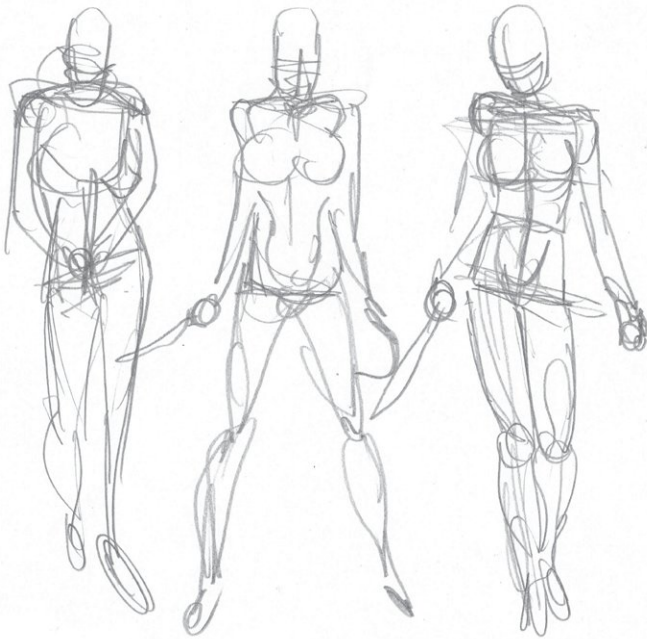
All right, everything we've learned up to this point about drawing, and not just drawing women, is kind of useless unless you can put it all together. In the particular case of this specific tutorial, we are talking about putting all that information together to create original, compelling, unique female characters.

These five pages won't deal with the minutiae of character design and costume detail, but talk about female character creation in a broader sense, and deal with the theory and thought behind a specific design.

At right is Maiden, shown in a drawing progression from very rough sketch through finished inks. The Maiden is a supernatural creature of revenge and death, and yet she has a purity of purpose despite her savage relentlessness. As a character she needed a supple sweetness, so I made her long and lean, sexy to attract. I chose to keep her line work very light and minimally stylistic, to contrast with her dark, ribbon-like tangles of hair, and the blood in which she is often drenched.



#19: BABES #5 - CHARACTERS!

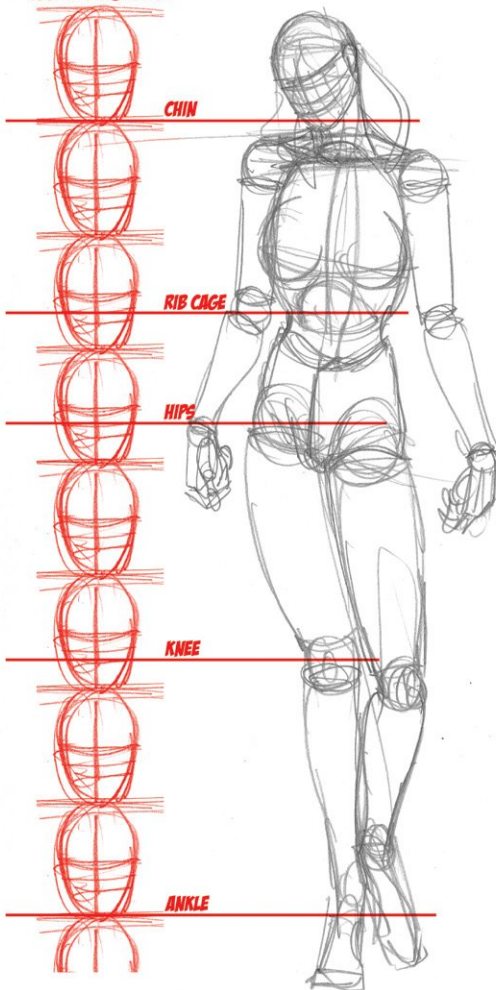


Hipster - For the Hipster character I searched for a pose that reflected her inner, brooding nature. The pose needed to suggest a deep thinker, yet someone of potential action. Sounds like BS, right? It's not.

You can see the stages, and I've identified the head height and some of the proportions. Feel free to measure the rest. Study how the bubble muscles lay over and attach to the understructure.

Her character as defined needed to be lean and healthy, she's not super-heroic. She needs a more "real" look, which is reflected in her proportion, musculature, costume details/clothing and even in her walk/stride.

**8 1/2 HEAD
TALL FIGURE**





#19: BABES #5 - CHARACTERS!

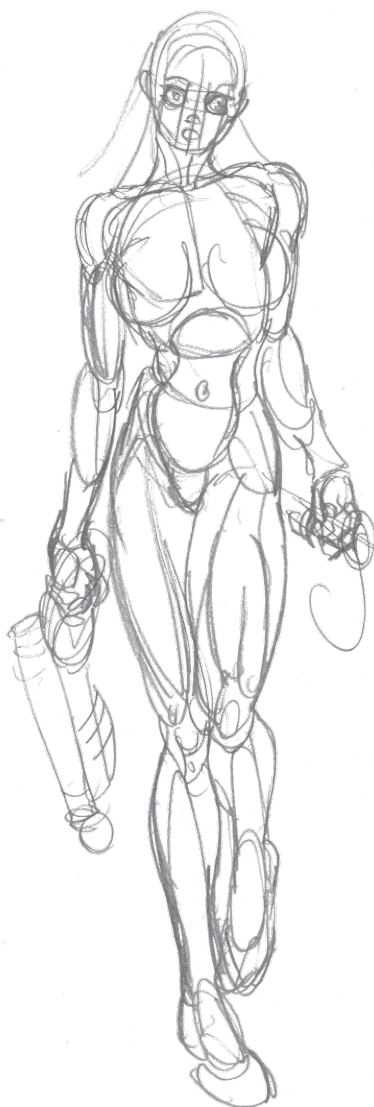
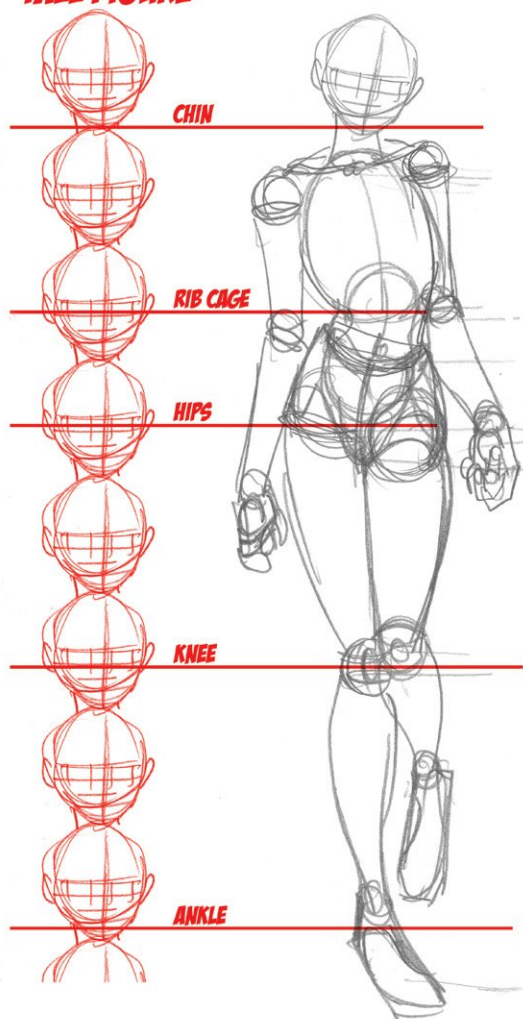
Manga Warrior - Here's a stab at my version of a manga-esque female warrior. Description reads, "...she's waif-ish, but womanly, capable, but always worried." Don't ask; if this was an email, this is where I'd post a winking smiley face.

Decided to go with an 8 1/3rd head tall figure, mostly because I wanted to do a wider than normal head, to account for much larger eyes, and for that specific look. Maybe I should have gone with 7 1/3rd heads, with the upper torso staying the same and the lower body (her legs) being a whole head shorter. What do you think? Maybe give it a try on your own?

Note that this more hyper-realistic character, as compared to the Hipster, has more movement in her body in the same simple pose. That's on purpose.



8 1/3 HEAD TALL FIGURE



#19: BABES #5 - CHARACTERS!

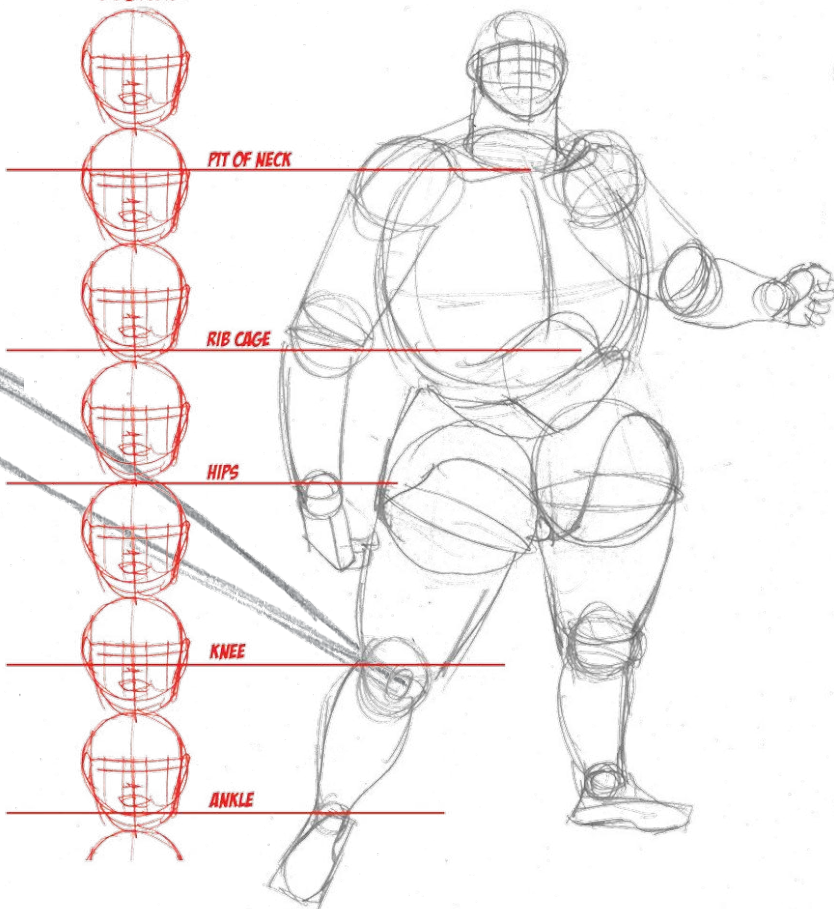


Massive Warrior - This is a very heavy woman warrior. She was described as "almost obscenely overweight, and extremely powerful, exudes confidence." I wanted to really ground this figure, and add to the feeling of weightiness as much as possible, so I went with just over 7 heads for her proportion. I wanted her wide, but not broad-shouldered, really wanted to impart a sloping feel from her head down.

Please study the bubble muscle figure. Not a lot of muscle in evidence here, more a bubble flesh or bubble fat figure. Note how the flesh hangs and overlaps, and in some cases hides parts of the anatomy. Soft flesh is very affected by gravity.

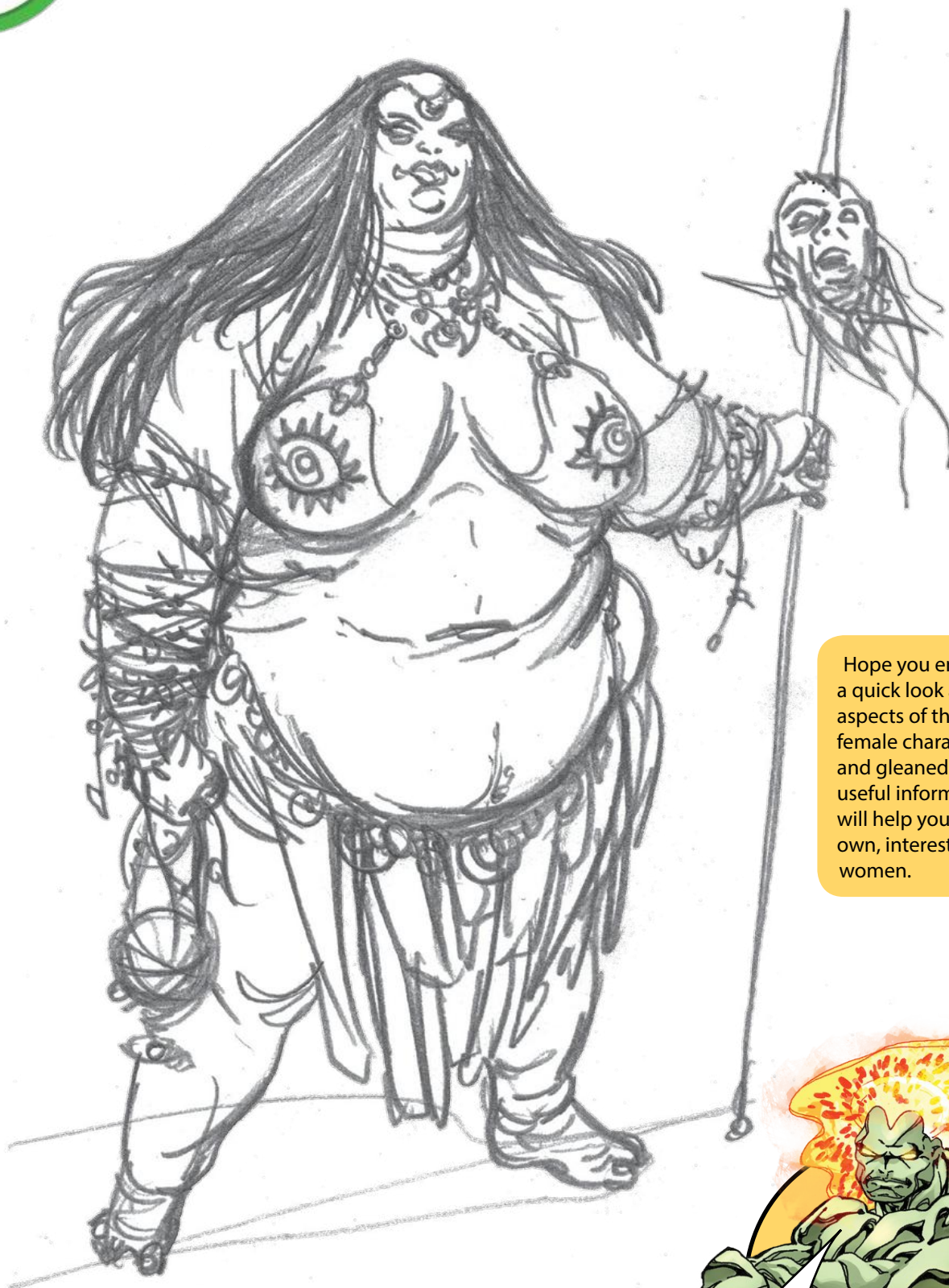


7 1/4 HEAD TALL FIGURE





#19: BABES #5 - CHARACTERS!



Hope you enjoyed a quick look at a few aspects of the Why of female character design, and gleaned some useful information that will help you create your own, interesting, unique women.



YOU DON'T ALWAYS NEED GUNS LIKE MINE TO HAVE POWER!

IN CLOSING



Thank you for taking this amazing artistic journey with me. My hope is that the bits of information littered on these pages will inspire, entertain and maybe even educate you on the art of narrative drawing. I hope I've given you a glimpse into the reasons we make the creative decisions we do when drawing powerful heroes. As always...
...keep drawing!

All my best,

BART SEARS

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has been a professional artist for DC Comics, Marvel Comics, Valiant, Image, Dark Horse, CrossGen and a number of other publishers. His style has graced *Justice*

League Europe and *Legends of the Dark Knight* for DC, *X-O Manowar* and *Turok* for Valiant, and *Blade* for Marvel. His *Turok* issues were million sellers.

Bart is also known for his covers for *Wizard Magazine*, which was home to his *Brutes and Babes* art tutorials. His talents were put to use designing toys for Hasbro, including *C.O.P.S.*, *G.I. Joe* and the *X-Men* line for ToyBiz, as well as creating concept art for video games. Bart has also been a teacher at the Kubert School.

Bart is the creative force behind Ominous Press, bringing to life relentless and powerful heroic stories. *Giantkillers*, *Dread Gods* and *Demi-God* are the first of many.

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